

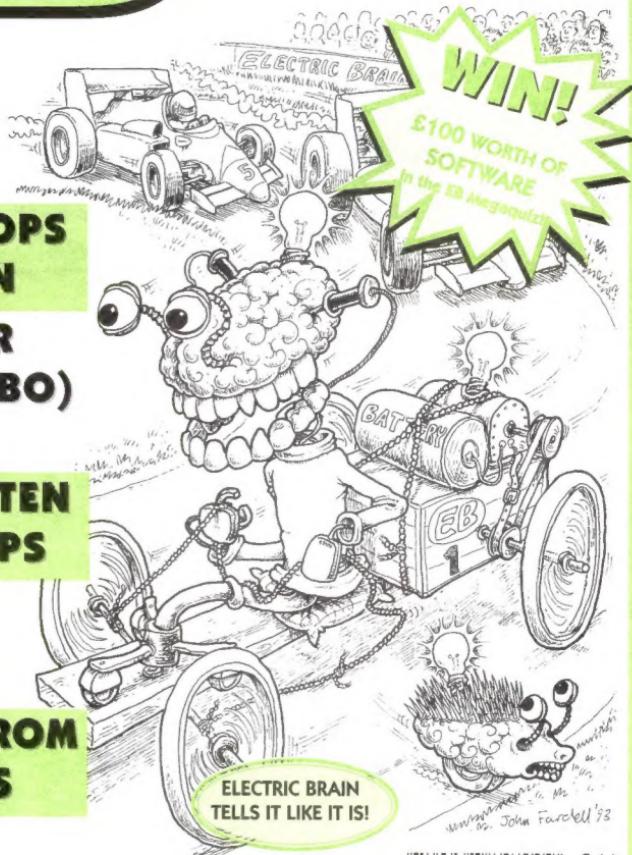
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EDITOR'S BIT

Yo fans,

Another issue completed... how time flies. It's been quite a strange month. The company which really hit the news was of course Code Masters, getting the one up on Nintendo with their Game Genie. You see... us little guys always win in the end!!!

Big news of the month on the hardware scene is Sega's release of their new smaller and cheaper Mega Drive and Mega-CD units in Japan. This makes me wonder: will Europe be getting these newer sequel machines, or will we continue with the older system — especially after the recent official release of the Mega-CD? Surely Sega won't abandon the older system so soon. So it's unlikely that either of the new machines will hit these shores officially until very late in the year or in 1994.

Although the MD2 is technically virtually identical to the older model, it does come with a six-button pad, which would save you having to buy one for games like Street Fighter II or Ex-Ranxa which can use it. So when SFII (MD version) hits the streets, it looks as though Mega Drive owners will have to fork out around £100 for the game and the pads!! Yikes!! This also goes for 'Engine owners'!

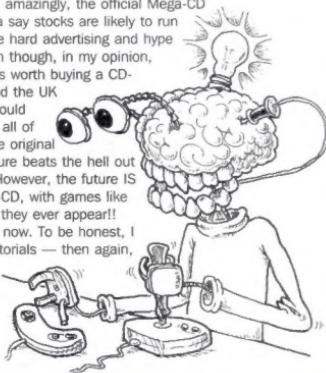
Still on the subject of Sega... amazingly, the official Mega-CD is selling like hot cakes — Sega say stocks are likely to run short very soon. It seems all the hard advertising and hype of Sega's CD is working — even though, in my opinion, none of the available software is worth buying a CD-ROM for. If only NEC had tapped the UK market a few years ago, they would

have made a killing! Just think, all of you could have been playing the original Street Fighter then!! Well... it sure beats the hell out of Body Blows on the Amiga!! However, the future IS looking promising for the Mega-CD, with games like Silphied and Thunderhawk... if they ever appear!!

Well, that's all my rattling for now. To be honest, I never know what to write in editorials — then again, I do write 'em when I'm half asleep at three in the morning!

So until next month, good-night.

Onn Lee



THE BRAINS BEHIND ELECTRIC BRAIN

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EB was cooked up, sliced and served to perfection in Nottingham

REPRODUCTION by Create Publishing Services Ltd Bath

DISTRIBUTED by Seymour, 1270 London Rd, London SW16 4DH

PRINTED by Wiltshire (Bristol) Ltd

SPECIAL THANKS TO Tsuyoshi Tamashiki (Japan), Console Concepts (0782) 712759, Krazy Konsoles (0422) 342901, Megaware (091) 549 8807, Video Game Centre (0202) 527314, P Mitchel, B Walker, T Cross

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Electric Brain ISSN 0968-8471

PUBLISHED by Space City Publishing Ltd, 77 Blythe Road, London W14 OHP; Tel 071 371 4000, Fax 071 371 4001

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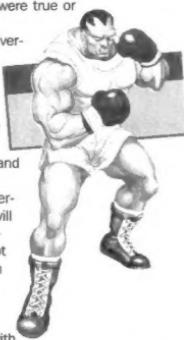
SFII: OFFICIAL — PLUS HYPER VERSION

OK... last issue we mentioned how Capcom was to officially announce if rumours about Street Fighter II coming out on other systems were true or not to the Japanese press. As you can see from the Software News, both the Mega Drive and PC Engine versions are to hit the streets sometime in June.

The official word from head PR man of Capcom was that the Mega Drive version would be available on standard ROM cartridge format, and NOT on CD. It will be released by Capcom themselves and not by Sega (as with Final Fight CD) in June in the US and Japan (no word yet on the UK release). As for price and capacity of the ROM cartridge, these are unknown.



SFII HYPER EDITION - SOON ON THE SUPER FAMICOM



The PC Engine version of the game will be supplied on Hu-Cards again, and not on CD. This version will be released by NEC Home Electronics (not Hudson Soft as with

the original Street Fighter, or NEC Avenue — a different part of NEC). As mentioned in previous issues of EB, the game will be on a 20 megabit ROM and will retail for around £60 in Japan... so you can be sure it will cost a bomb over here. A six button controller pad will be released at the same time for the game and this will cost around £25.

Hopefully we'll have reviews of both versions real soon!

But all you Super Famicom owners don't have to drool over this news, as Capcom are currently putting together the Hyper Fighting (turbo) edition. Yep! You will soon be able to launch those Yepping Fireballs from Chun Li's hands, Leap into the air with Honda, Roll upwards with Blanka and land on opponents, Teleport with Dhalsim and Cyclone in mid-air with Ryu and Ken. But when will the game be available for the SF? Well, it's early days so don't expect it until around Christmas time. Although no other magazine has printed this (at the time of writing), we can reveal that this is 100% true — no nasty rumour, as the information we got came directly from the editor of a certain Japanese magazine, who got the word from a reliable Capcom PR man.



THE PC ENGINE SIX BUTTON SFII PAD

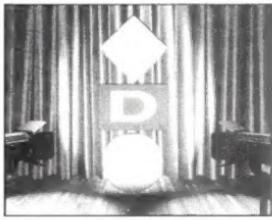
zine has printed this (at the time of writing), we can reveal that this is 100% true — no nasty rumour, as the information we got came directly from the editor of a certain Japanese magazine, who got the word from a reliable Capcom PR man.

NAMCO 3DO

Latest Japanese company to invest in the 3DO project is Namco. And, it seems, not only are they going to produce software for the 3DO, but they will release the multi-media machine under their own name (as with Panasonic, AT&T, etc.).

On the software side, it's very likely that Namco's first titles for the 3DO machine will be conversions of their top 3D polygon space shoot 'em ups — Star Blade and very possibly Galaxian 3. With Namco's support, the 3DO looks like having a great future... watch this space for other Japanese companies to join up!

As any company can buy into 3DO, wouldn't it be great if companies like Sega, NEC and Nintendo produced a 3DO machine which was also compatible with the Mega Drive (and Mega-CD), PC Engine (and Super CD) and Super Famicom (and CD system)? Maybe Commodore could join up and produce a 3DO which was Amiga 1200 compatible too?

**NEC GIVES A 4x TO NEW CD-ROM**

If you think 540 megabytes of data on a CD is quite a lot, latest news is that top electronics giant NEC has developed a CD-ROM that can hold an amazing 2 gigabytes — which is four times as much as the current CD-ROM.

But don't expect it to be available soon, as it's still under development. Plus there is no mention from the NEC camp that it will be available for the current PC Engine. Maybe for the 32-bit machine, whenever that arrives?

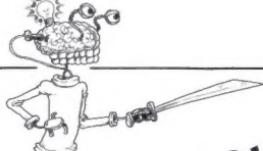
GUN CRAZED JAPS

Regular readers of EB will have read some issues ago that Sega had released a laser-tag style gun called the Virtual Yarou which cost around £25. It consists of a foldable plastic hand gun (called the "Virtual Shooter") and a "Virtual Unit", which straps around your head; this contains sensors to detect if an opponent has hit you. This Virtual Unit also has a small eyepiece that covers the right eye and displays (like an aircraft's HUD) hits on your opponent.

Anyway, just like the Japanese to exploit every opportunity... in early March, a place called the Amazing Square opened in Japan — here people can go around shooting one another. The outdoor play area consists of a massive maze made out of wooden fences. Players, armed with their guns and wearing the head unit, must try to shoot as many of the enemy as possible... while trying not to get lost either!

The game looks great fun, and one day it might spread over here — especially to stately homes with mazes!! We hope to get some of the Virtual Yarou in the next few months, so that we can give you the lowdown on Sega's new gadget.... or g... ck.





SEGA SHOW SEQUELS

The Mega Drive 2 looks like a third of the original machine has been sawn off; it measures 220x212x59mm... like a lunch box. The machine is still in black, with a blue reset button, white on/off switch and rather horrible red cartridge flaps. As mentioned last month, the specs of the machine are the same as the original — minus the EXT. (modem) socket, ear phone socket and volume control. Plus the original



THE ALL NEW MEGA DRIVE 2 AND MEGA-CD 2

patible with the current hardware... so you can attach the original Mega Drive to the Mega-CD 2, and the Mega Drive 2 to the original Mega-CD, although they won't look as snazzy! The new machines were released in Japan on 23rd April, with the MD2 costing 12800 yen (£78) and the M-CD2 costing 29800 yen (£180).

Sega also showed off their four-player adapter (Sega-Tap) and Mega Drive mouse. The multi-player adapter is quite an interesting item, as Sega have stated that it can be plugged into either control port. So with two units, up to 8 players can play a game simultaneously, although it's very doubtful whether any games will actually cater for 8 players!

The first game, however, that will use the adapter will be Sega's own soccer game, J League Pro Soccer; it should be out as you read this. Hopefully we'll have a full review of it in the next issue. The Sega-Tap, which is similar to Hudson's Multi-Tap for the PC Engine/Super Famicom, costs 3000 yen (£18) and is available now.

The Sega-Mouse (which should be available now) costs 5000 yen (£30). The mouse, in usual black, is similar to the

Super Famicom version with two blue buttons (which will simulate the A and C buttons on the standard pad). The first games to use it will be a number of RPGs... as expected!

To finish off the Sega selection of goodies, Microsoft are also to release a new version of their audio/video adapter. The XMD-2RGB/S is a small box that plugs into the audio/video din socket on the back of the Mega Drive. The box has a host of sockets, including audio and video phono sockets, and a RGB 'S' socket — this is more popular on Japanese TVs, being the equivalent to the RGB Scart/Euro connector.



SEGATAP 4 PLAYER ADAPTER

At the end of March, Sega held a meeting in Japan to show off their new hardware and accessories. So what was new (that we didn't already know about)?

As mentioned in the last issue, Sega are to release newer and cheaper versions of their Mega Drive and Mega-CD units — called appropriately enough, the Mega Drive 2 and Mega-CD 2. Both units were on display at the Sega '93 meeting and they look very much like the PC Engine set-up.



SEGA MOUSE

pad has been replaced by the newer 68 six-button one, so that buyers won't need to purchase an extra six-button pad when they buy Street Fighter II.

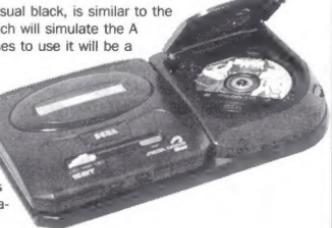
The Mega-CD 2 has been totally redesigned. It's now a lot smaller and resembles the original PC Engine CD-ROM system. Everything is now simpler... with flip top door and just a small red LED power light — no flashy disk access lights etc., as with the original. Unfortunately, there are still no CD operational controls to run standard music CDs on the machine, without having to access the TV/monitor and using a joystick pad.

Both the new models will be totally com-

patible with the current hardware... so you can attach the original Mega Drive to the Mega-CD 2, and the



NEW VERSION MEGA-CD START-UP SCREEN



DUO-R STILL TOO PRICEY

Although NEC released the new PC Engine Duo-R at the end of March, the machine hasn't exactly been selling like hot cakes. The Duo-R might be 2000 yen cheaper than the original machine (at 39,800 yen — approx £240). But the older Duo (in the darker grey colour) is selling in most stores at a discounted price — around the same price as the newer, white Duo-R. A number of stores are even selling them cheaper. As the "R" model doesn't have any new features, the Japanese public knows which is the better buy.

If this sets the trend, it's likely that Sega's soon to be released cheaper Mega Drive 2 won't do too well when it hits the streets either — especially as a number of the original features have been chopped off, although you do get a six-button pad.



IS THAT AN UZI 9mm IN YOUR POCKET?

Chief machine gunner, Commander Dan... the Man, checks out the tanks with the best shoot 'em ups. So line up your gun sight and read on...

The console shoot 'em up as we know it was probably born with late 1987's arrival of Hudson Soft's R-Type on the PC Engine. This conversion of Irem's arcade classic was one of the first games on the machine, and the game which proved that the Engine was the first console that was capable of doing accurate coin-op conversions. R-Type's graphics were ported directly from the coin-op, and the sound FX were sampled from the arcade machine. This, combined with the great music and painstaking attention to detail, produced a near perfect conversion which has only been bettered by a couple of games (conversion wise.)

The next big game was Hudson Soft's Gunhed, a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up which set new standards in awesome weaponry and chaotic action. Though rather easy, Gunhed is still a great game and has been followed by some good sequels, including the excellent Soldier Blade.

Since then there have been lots of great shoot 'em ups for the PC Engine, including Image Fight, Image Fight 2, Spriggan Mk 2, Nemesis, Gradius II, Super Darius (a truly brilliant shoot 'em up with what I consider to be the best sound-

track ever), Gate of Thunder (a brilliant game which makes a mockery of what the 16-bit machines are capable of), Soldier Blade, etc. The list is very long.

Though the Engine is definitely the shoot 'em up freaks' choice, there have been worthy blasting games on other consoles. The first one to put the Mega Drive on the shoot 'em up map was Thunderforce III. This game featured excellent graphics, fabulously sound and brilliant playability — it's one of the few shoot 'em ups I never tire of. The only other MD shoot 'em up of similar quality is the technically brilliant Thunderforce IV. This is very similar to its predecessor, and just as brilliant.

Two shoot 'em ups which are often highly rated by other magazines are NCS' games Hellfire and Gynoug. Hellfire is a good conversion of a very playable coin-op, but it simply doesn't have the lasting interest of Thunderforce III. Gynoug has very pretty graphics but the gameplay is awful, making this one to avoid.

The Super Famicom has fared better than the Mega Drive for quality shoot 'em ups. The first of these was Konami's Gradius III. This

conversion was actually better than the coin-op, featuring extra stages from Gradius II (Vulcan Venture) and several secret stages. Though the graphics and sound are excellent, many people were disappointed with this game because of the severe slow down that occurs while playing. I personally love the game, despite the slow down.

Since then we have had: UN Squadron (one of the greatest console shooters ever, and much better than the coin-op), Parodius

(Konami's wacky brilliant Gradius parody), Super Aleste (many people love this game, but I feel it is all flash and little substance — it is also ridiculously easy, as I finished it on my first attempt with over ten lives remaining!), brilliant (but very short lived) Contra III and the graphically amazing Axelay.

TOP TEN SHOOT 'EM UPS

=1	Super Darius	(PC-E)
=1	Gate of Thunder	(PC-E)
3	UN Squadron	(SF)
4	Thunderforce III	(MD)
5	Thunderforce IV	(MD)
6	Contra III	(SF)
7	Gradius III	(SF)
8	Soldier Blade	(PC-E)
9	Image Fight	(PC-E)
10	Parodius	(SF)

WIN £100 WORTH OF SOFTWARE IN THE AMAZING EB GAMES COMPO

Just answer the five mind-numbingly hard questions below (not so hard to regular EB readers who should know all the answers by now) and send your entry to EB GAMES COMP, ELECTRIC BRAIN, SPACE CITY, 77 BLYTHE ROAD, LONDON W14 OHP. The sender of the first correct entry drawn out of all those received by Monday 5th July will receive £100 worth of software of his/her choice.

- 1 What have the following got in common: Starfox, Sonic 2 and Titus Software?
- 2 Which character from the original Street Fighter game will feature in Capcom's sequel for the Super Famicom?
- 3 How many different shapes are there in the original Tetris game?
- 4 How many characters from Capcom's Street Fighter II appeared in the original Street Fighter game?
- 5 Name a company that produces games for the three main games consoles — Super Famicom, Mega Drive and PC Engine.

BEST CONSOLE FOR SHOOT 'EM UPS

Undoubtedly the PC Engine. Although the Super Famicom has the same number of games in my top ten, things would look very different if I listed my top 20 shoot 'em ups — the quantity of good shoot 'em ups on the PC Engine is enormous. Be warned though, to get the most out of the machine, you'll need a 60Hz Engine with a CD-ROM attached (a SCART Duo is a good buy). Most of the new titles are CD-ROM only, and some games are not too great on a slower 50Hz machine.

(Note: my list was compiled before playing the incredible PC Engine CD games Lords of Thunder and Image Fight II... both of which could sneak into the top 10!)

THE NEO GEO PAGE

FATAL FURY 2

Dan: Although the original game was less than brilliant, I am extremely impressed with this rather fabulous sequel. The game itself is very similar, with graphics looking much like the original and with similar gameplay. But the whole thing has been improved, with the emphasis taken away from the special attacks, something which ruined the original (although Andy still has one overly powerful move) and, most importantly, the addition of five great new characters: Cheng - the fat chi master, Jubei - the Judo expert, Mai - a Japanese fan-wielding woman, Kim - a



CHAN DOES A DEADLY ROLL

Korean Tae Kwon Do practitioner and Big Bear - a huge Australian wrestler.

These characters are brilliant

and are a big part of this game's appeal. Whereas most

Street

Fighter

I

clones have instantly forgettable characters, Fatal Fury 2's fighters are the best thing seen since SFII itself — particularly Cheng who, is extremely funny; his moves are extremely unorthodox and he makes some hilarious sounds. Indeed, one of the best things about this game is the brilliant samples. Andy has a strange "Allow me!" move (well that's what it sounds like), while Terry has an even stranger "Heineken" move (I wish I knew where SNK get these samples



KIM SHOWS HE CAN PERFORM A SOMERSAULT KICK TOO

from!). Cheng, as mentioned before, makes all sorts of weird sounds and Mai never shuts up, with her Chun Li-style yips and yaps. The only character who doesn't make lots of noises is Jubei, who is as quiet as a mouse. But just to prove he's as good a comedian as the others, he throws pizzas at his opponents! (It would have been even better if he would have shouted "Ayingerbrau Pils" as he does it.)

As you can see Fatal Fury 2 is an amusing game, not as wacky as Ranma, but I can't believe the programmers approached this in a serious manner. The gameplay itself is extremely good — not in the class of SFII, but certainly the next best thing and miles better than the likes of Mortal Kombat or Fighters History.

Usually in a review we dedicate a few sentences to commenting on gameplay but, to be honest, there is no point here. The best possible description I can give is to say that it's extremely similar to SFII, but not quite as good.

This is the best clone on the market and an essential purchase if you can afford it!

SCORE

Video	91%
Audio	92%
Playability	94%
Lastability	X%

93%

NEO NEWS

Although the power house Neo Geo doesn't get many new games each month (a bit like the Lynx really), SNK — who we have heard have pinched a whole gang of ex-Capcom staff — have been very busy and have a number of new titles in the works. Apart from Fire Suplex which they showed at AOU '93 in Japan (see report), others include Samurai Showdown, Reaction, Magician Lord 2, World Heroes 2 and the expected sequel to Art of Fighting. BUT before all these, watch out for Sengoku 2, which has recently appeared in coin-op form and which will be shipping from the States as you read this... hopefully a full review in next month's issue. So start saving!

As for the Neo Geo CD-ROM, latest word from Japan is that a prototype of the system should appear around September. It's very likely that SNK will re-release their previous games on CD format so you'll be able to pick up software like Art or Fighting and Fatal Fury 2 at a fraction of the cost. This means the CD-ROM will have quite a fair old bit of main memory! Unfortunately, there's no word of the system's specs or the price, although US sources have stated the machine should sell for around \$450, with games on CD format selling for \$50 each — certainly a lot cheaper than your average Art of Fighting cartridge!



FIRE SUPLEX... ANOTHER 100+ MEG GAME

FATAL FURY 2: SECRET SPECIAL MOVES

As you know, all the characters in the game have special moves. But each of them also has a secret special move. So, here they are. (Assume you're facing right.)

Guy with baseball cap (Terry Bogard): Big Napalm Flame: DOWN, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT, DOWN-LEFT, RIGHT and then press B, C.

Guy in white (Andy Bogard): Whirlwind Punch: DOWN to charge, DOWN-RIGHT, RIGHT and then press B, D.

Thai guy (Joe Higashi): Mega Tornado Punch: RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN-LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT and then press B, C.

Taekwondo light blue suit guy (Kim Kap Hwan): Big Somersault Kick: DOWN, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT, DOWN-LEFT, RIGHT and then press B, D.

Japanese Ninja Girl (Mai Shirnui): Flaming Elbow: RIGHT, DOWN-LEFT, RIGHT and then press B, C.

Very big wrestler (Big Bear): Breath Mega Flame: RIGHT, DOWN-RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN-LEFT, RIGHT and then press B, C.

Old Judo man (Jubei Yamada): Explosion: DOWN-LEFT to charge, DOWN, DOWN-RIGHT, then press B, C.

Little fat guy (Cheng Sinzan): Electrical Energy Ball: DOWN-LEFT to charge, DOWN, RIGHT, then press B, C.

MEGA DRIVE SOFTWARE NEWS

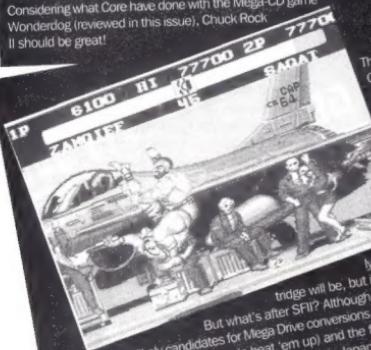
Core Design

With Chuck Rock II (Son of Chuck) already on the Amiga (it's an extremely groovy sequel), it's no surprise that the game will soon be converted to the Mega Drive — it should be available around August/September.

Considering what Core have done with the Mega-CD game

Wonderdog (reviewed in this issue), Chuck Rock

II should be great!



The first Capcom game to be programmed and released by Capcom themselves — Street Fighter II

Championship Edition — will be out in June. It's looking to be as good a conversion as the Super

Famicom game, not to mention the Engine version (although, the Engine game looks slightly bet-

Capcom

ter). As you might expect, all the moves and features

of the coin-op will be present, although the bonus

rounds (like the Engine version) will be limited to

the car smashing and barrel breaking. SFII will

be the first title to use the Sega 68 joystick; it's

likely that Capcom will release an adapter

lead for their Capcom Fighter Stick, avail-

able for the Super Famicom. Check out

next issue for the full review... hopefully

Capcom still haven't confirmed how big the car-

tridge will be, but it is very likely to be 16meg.

But what's after SFII? Although Capcom haven't announced anything officially,

the two likely candidates for Mega Drive conversions are Captain Commando (the

excellent four player Final Fight style beat 'em up) and the fairly recent coin-op Dynasty

Wars II, which is very popular in Japan — even though it wasn't a

success over here.



Tengen

Another game to be released around now will be Toaplan's Snow Bros under the original coin-op, including the two player option. It will appear on 8meg Cartridge.

Regular readers of EB will have read about the conversion of Toaplan's Stamp Fight for the Mega Drive. To recap, it was initially to be converted on to CD-ROM only, with music by Yuzo Koshiro. Then it was announced that two versions would be produced — one on CD and one on cartridge. Now it seems the CD version has been dropped, and the 8meg cartridge game will be out in mid June. The coin-op game will still have music composed by Yuzo, and it will incorporate the original

Tengen are also producing a new MD version with different levels and weapons, release in July. Plus work is in progress to produce Pitfaller 2, which should rival Mortal Combat, and RBL 5, another sequel to the famous baseball game.



Taito

After Ninja Warriors, Taito's other CD-ROM

game Night Striker will be available at the end of May in Japan. If you

don't already know, Night Striker is a fast 3D shoot 'em up,

a sort of Space Harrier game, but with the player controlling

a hovercraft (well... more like the flying Bacta to the future

car). Graphically, the game looks extremely blocky but

if this is because of the super fast 3D effects it won't

be bad. Check out the full review soon!

I also look out for The Flintstones, a game

not too unlike PC-kid on the PC Engine. Fred

must find the brighter who has stolen

items from his humble cave in this

massive arcade action adventure.

Another review that's on the list

for EB 36.

Well... nothing, but work is

still in progress on the excel-

lent looking Rocket Knight

Adventures. The super

armoured rodent, with jet

pack and sword, is looking to

produce a game that will be as

good as Capcom's Contra on

the SGS. Rocket Knight can soar

the skies, slice up his enemies,

hang upside down with his tail,

swim... and more! We can't wait!

Also look out for the

giant bosses... available at the end of June on 8meg car-

tridge.

Konami

Top Pro Golf

After the rather poor Top Pro Golf released a year ago for the Mega Drive, Soft Vision

are to release a sequel at the end of June. As the 8meg cartridge goes, it looks almost

identical to the original, so it won't be too impressive.

More interestingly, however, is a great looking horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up in the style of Darius.

Gorgeous graphics, some awesome weapons and giant bosses... available at the end of June on 8meg car-

tridge.



Soft Vision

Issue 35 • June 1993

Sega (Japan)

The Japanese side of Sega hasn't released many titles of late. But watch out soon for some interesting titles, if you like action shoot 'em up adventures like Contra and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, then you need to know that Sega are working on a cute game based on that format. The game can be played by two people and resembles Capcom's Midnight Wanderers. Definitely one to look out for. Will be on 8meg cartridge, hopefully on sale in August.

Also most RPG Sega fans are dying to lay their hands on Phantasy Star IV, which still hasn't been given a release date.

Sega will have another similar 16meg RPG called Surging Aura out in July. Let's hope the game will be converted into English very soon!

Sega are also working on a cute horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up for release on the Mega CD. The game has you controlling a girl in a playboy bunny suit

upon a dragon. You're up against a host of crazy floaties, including monkeys throwing bananas, giant floating ships crewed by fury creatures, etc. The game is in its early stages so it won't be out for some time.

Coming soon from Sega will be Ex-Ranza, a Cybermator-style shoot 'em up game that's compatible with the 68

joypad. Why six buttons? If you've played Cybermator on the SF, you'll know why. The interesting thing about Ex-Ranza is that the Mech you control comes in two parts. There's the robot figure itself, which is fully controllable (similar to Cybermator), armed with a standard gun and a mega weapon; and there's a sort of bike that follows your robot along the ground, which also fires when you fire. The "bike" can be ridden on to get through narrow gaps and deadly acid; it also holds your weapon supply! So, to change weapons, you must rip back every so often. The game is amazing, with some ultra massive bosses — the first taking up nearly the whole screen. Check out the full review soon.

Visco

Ten-pin bowling fans can play the game on their Mega Drive in the coming weeks as Visco are releasing Boogie Woogie Bowling on 4meg cartridge around the time this EB hits the streets. It looks very much like the Super Famicom version... which was pretty good for a few goes, but got too boring.

MUSIC CDs AND ANIMATIONS

When it comes to video games — apart from the graphics, sound effects and how well they play — game music has a substantial contribution to make. It's just like the Japanese to take advantage of every opportunity, so for a few years now they've been putting game music on to CDs and selling them to make lots of money. The majority of these CDs are available on the Scitron label. Some of the current releases includes the following:

Capcom: Just when you thought there can't be any more Street Fighter II music CDs (there are already around 6 of them now), another one has just popped up... although this is the Instrumental Version. Incidentally, if you intend to buy an SF II music CD, 3 of them have the same cover, with only slight differences in colour, backdrops and, of course, the title.

Capcom have also recently released the music CD of their coin-op game Varth (Operation Thunder Storm).

Konami seems to release a new Game Music CD each month, and their latest is entitled "Konami GM Hits Factory I"; it retails in Japan for Y2,800. As the title suggests, the CD contains a collection of Konami's past hit music scores. As Konami produces some of the best music scores, this is probably one to get hold off.

Konami have also just released the Game Music CD of their Super Famicom game Pop 'n Twinbee (as reviewed in this issue). Y1,800.

Scitron: If you haven't listened to any music CDs before and you'd like to try some out, one worth checking out would be Scitron's latest, titled Scitron Video Game Music - Best of the Year 1992. The

double CD pack contains some of the most popular, and best tracks released under the Scitron label, so you can expect music scores from Capcom, Konami, Sega, Taito, etc. Cost in Japan: 3,500 yen (£21). If you can't get hold of this one, check out next issue... where we will (hopefully) be giving a copy away!

SNK: Following the release of Fatal Fury 2 for the Neo Geo, you can now get hold of the Music CD too.

Video System has recently released the Music CD of their coin-op shoot 'em up Sonic Wings. The music soundtracks and sound effects are taken directly off the coin-op game... so if you like the arcade machine's sound, then this is for you! Available in Japan for Y1,500. The game is also currently being converted to the Super Famicom by Video Systems themselves.

Other recent Music CD releases include Dragon Ball Z, based on the music from Bandai's beat 'em up (reviewed in this issue).

ANIMATION VIDEO

A number of video games in the past have been made into video animations. These include Konami's Salamander and Falcom's Ys Series. Latest game to make the transformation is SNK's Art of Fighting, which hit the streets of Japan on 21 April. There's not much information on the VHS video, but its storyline is likely to be very similar to the game's original theme, together with the same excellent music.

Nihon Bussan

Can you guess what game Nihon Bussan have on offer? F-1 Circus? Correct! They are currently putting together the F-1 Circus CD. However, the game won't be another

top-down view, but a 3D in-cockpit one like F-1 Hero MD or Super Monaco GP.

Engine game, with the stats, dials and music from CD.

Wolf Team

If you'd like something new to play on your Mega-CD, then Wolf Team will have released Devastator in Japan as you read this. The game has you controlling a cybernetic armoured warrior in a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. It features lots of weapons, which can all be powered up, and lots of mega big baddies to kill. One to check out!

T&E Soft

Although PGA Tour Golf II is the top golf game around, T&E Soft are to convert their famous New 3D golf simulations to the Mega Drive in the coming year. Considering one of the problems of the game with its faster processor should be a real big improvement. It's likely to be released by Sega and should be out around August.



will also feature all of course, groovy music from CD.

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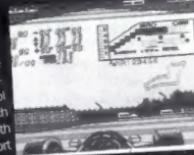
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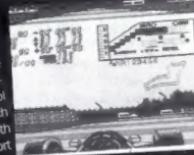
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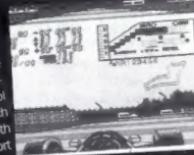
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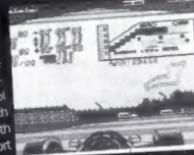
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AOU '93 - ARCADE EXTRAVAGANZA!

Held

recently in Japan, AOU '93 was one of the big events for the coin-op industry. Japanese producers turned out in droves to show off their new arcade games. Judging by what was on show, this year looks set to be dominated by even more beat 'em ups, a number of Final Fight games, a variety of Street Fighter II clones and Wrestling. EB's Japanese spy took a purse-full of yen to check out the latest offerings.



THE SHOW ITSELF - ANYONE FOR A SMOKE, TONIGHT?

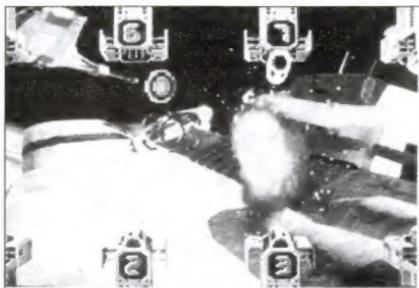
The biggest attraction at the show was undoubtedly from Sega, who had thrilled everyone last year with their Virtua Racing F-1 simulator. This year they showed off the simulator once again, but now with eight of them linked together. It's called the Virtua Formula and — yes! — it means eight people can now race against each other in this excellent driving game! Will we ever see eight of these monsters together in the UK?

Sega also showed off a running demo of what their Model 2 arcade board can do (the Model 1 is used in Virtua Racing); it's said to be twice as good as its predecessor so we can't wait to see what game they will use it on. Other Sega delights included their two player boxing game,

Title Fight. The cabinet for this game is like two normal machines joined together — each fighter has their



SEGA'S TITLE FIGHT



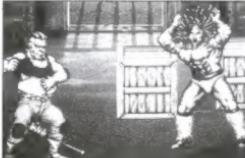
SEGA'S 8 PLAYER SHOOT 'EM UP IN THE AS-1 SIMULATOR

own screen and the 3D action looks superb, with great animation. A nice touch is that, when you hit the canvas, the screen wobbles all over the place as if you were dazed. One to look out for.

Following the Street Fighter II, one-on-one beat 'em up theme, Sega have come up with Dark Edge. It's a lot more original than many others as the game is played in 3D. The fighters are armed to the teeth and can jump in and out of the screen — this looks better than Fatal Fury!

Sega wouldn't be Sega without showing a simulator, and the massive AS-1 machine was at the show again. It enables eight players to blast away enemy aliens — and feel extremely sick in the process.

SNK was there too to show off their Neo Geo Deck system. The Deck is a metal case which contains all the Neo Geo's hardware as well as the facility to house a number of Neo Geo boards. It also has a coin-slot box so it can replace the bulkier MVS arcade machine. The Deck will be more



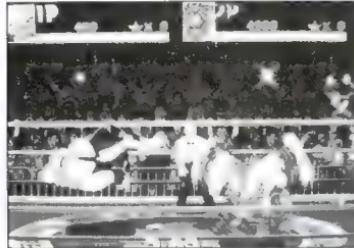
TWO KIDS AREN'T ENOUGH IN KIDS' WRESTLER - NEO GEO

portable and, by adding a monitor and plugging in the joysticks (SNK also showed off a new sexier joystick in light blue colours!), it will be more convenient.

As for new games, SNK also had a couple of offerings. Segekenko 2 was on show — it looks very similar to the original, but with bigger and meaner baddies as well as a new stage where you fight on horse back! Their other new game is a Wrestling title called Fire Suplex. It's another 100meg beat 'em up and it looks like it was programmed by the same talented people who gave us Art of Fighting, as the character sprites are just as huge. Some of the fighters also perform similar moves. For example, the wrestlers' special moves include the ability to breathe fire and another that lets them fry their opponents with a touch of electricity! Although it's a wrestling game, some fights are fought out of the ring in the back streets. Looks like another must game!



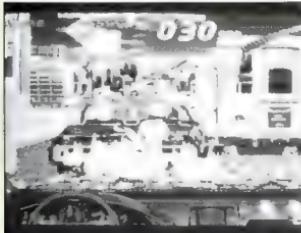
next fighting game will NOT be another version of Street Fighter II, although it will be very similar. Called Muscle Bomber (subtitled The Body Explosion), it's another one on one beat 'em up, but this time it's a wrestling game. Again, there's a choice between eight fighters, one of whom is Haggar from Final Fight; his special move is the screw pile driver. The other opponents include a Guile-like fighter (with a similar haircut), a really fat poly-poly bloke, and a



guy with long pink hair -- this could possibly be a woman. All of them have the usual different moves and special attacks. The game can also be played by four people in tag team matches! Looks real hot, and could be the game to send SFII to its grave once and for all. Definitely a top game to be converted!

Capcom also showed off two Final Fight style games. One is based on the Punisher, while the other uses characters from the American comic Cadillacs and Dinosaurs. The former is a one or two player game with the second player controlling Nick Fury, while the latter can be played by three people. Both look very similar... big thugs, karate men, aliens, weapons to pick up, etc.

Other attractions at AOU '93 included Taito's new improved Super D3BOS simulator (Taito's answer to Sega's R360),



running a game called Dog Fight (pretty obvious what sort of game that is). Taito also had Super Chase, a new version of the original Chase HQ game. This time, however, you are actually in the car (as in Rad Mobile) although you still have to crash into the joy ride! Finally from Taito came Football Champ '93, the sequel to their popular soccer game.

answer to Capcom Street Fighter II is a beat 'em up which enables four people to play at the same time -- it's called Knuckle Hell. The game features a choice of six different fighters, all armed with different weapons; the fighters can move in and out of the screen, as in Fatal Fury. They can also attack from different planes, so you could be standing in front when someone else jumps forward with a flying kick to your head!!

Namco also showed off Lucky and Wild, a two player driving game. Here each player also has a gun to shoot the enemy vehicles — a bit like Line of Fire.

also had a few new games on show. First up was Mystic Warriors, a four player beat 'em up that follows the Final

Fight theme — or should that be Turtles or X-men? You take control of young heroes with different powers against the forces of evil... as ever. The game, as usual for Konami, has excellent graphics.

They also had a Mercs-style game, although it was described as an RPG in the Japanese magazines because of its animated fantasy storyline and its similarity to Capcom's Magic Sword. In this game your knight can increase his



weapon and magic powers by opening chests scattered around each level. 1-2 players.

Konami also showed off a new soccer game, but this looks pretty average.

had two beat 'em ups on offer: a Street Fighter II style game and one along the lines of Final Fight. The SFII game is called Fighting History; you can choose from nine fighters, all with special moves. In fact it's very much like SFII all round, with fighters doing mega-damage screw power drivers, fireballs and even some very familiar somersault kicks. 'Nuff said.

And the Final Fight game is more like a Neo Geo beat 'em up... you know the sort...

Jaleco had the sequel to their Formula one racing game - Grand Prix Star II which again can be linked up so that eight players can race each other; and an eight level, 1-2 player vertical Sci-Fi shoot 'em up which looked pretty good.

As you might expect from Toaplan, they had another vertical Sci-fi blaster called V-V. Again, this one looks great, lots of weapons collected in the Gradius manner, big bosses, in the usual Toaplan style. They also had a Final Fight game called Knuckle Bush which doesn't look bad.

Well, those were some of the highlights of AOU '93. All in all we can look forward to some good new games making it to UK coinops, as and when they're allowed to escape from Japan.



SUPER FAMICOM SOFTWARE NEWS

Atus

There have been a number of car racing games for the SF, but a lack of motorbike ones. Atus, however, are working on such a title — currently called GP-1. The game looks very much like Taito's bike game on the Engine, with split screen two player action. Will be on 8meg cartridge.

TWO PLAYER BIKE RACING - GP-1

Data East

One of the toughest beat 'em up games on the Neo Geo, Segeken, will be converted to the SF by Data East on 8meg cartridge. Early screen shots of the game look very promising, but the characters are a lot smaller than in the original game. Although only on 8meg, hopefully the game will keep all the original music and sound effects, which were totally amazing. No release dates.

Data East also have a futuristic role play game called Shadowrun, based on the strategy board game of the same name. Check out next issue for a full review to see whether Data East can pull off the task of creating an action game that combines role play elements and adventure in a 3D isometric environment.

LJN

LJN have a few new titles around the corner, including a new version of Aliens 3 for the SF. This again is produced by Probe, the people that did the MD version. This SF version features bigger sprites and better graphics overall, but the gameplay based on rescuing the prisoners remains very much the same. In fact, the early version we've managed to play is very much like the MD game, but zoomed in. Should be out soon after you read this!

Wrestling fans will be jumping for joy as LJN will also soon release WWF Super Wrestle Mania II. Judging by the screen shots, this mega 16meg cartridge looks to be very much like the original, but will include more wrestlers to choose from and additional special moves — something that was badly missing in the original.



ALIENS 3 - GRAPHICALLY BETTER THAN MD VERSION

Elite

With rumours that the next games to use the Super FX (Moto) chip will either be a 3D racing game or a Dungeon Master style role play game, Elite have announced that they are currently working on Super Racing SFX, a very realistic driving simulation that will incorporate the super chip. The game is expected to appear soon after the official release of Star Fox (dogs... Starwing), but when exactly that will be is another matter. Considering how effective the 3D graphics were in Star Fox, Elite's baby should be certainly worth an eyeball. We'll keep you posted.

Hudson

Hudson looks to be converting a host of Engine games to the SF, as their latest is Super Power League, a baseball game. As baseball games go, this is one of the better ones — looks pretty good and will be out on 12meg cartridge for release around August.



Human

With the release of the four player adapter, it's no surprise that Human will bring out a sequel to their soccer game to take advantage of add-on. Super Formation Soccer 2, again on 4meg cartridge, will be available in June. The game itself looks almost identical to the original.



SUPER SOCCER - NOW 4 PEOPLE CAN PLAY TOGETHER - BUT LOOKS THE SAME

Hori

Hori are more known for their joystick, pads and other accessories, so to release a two player Strider-style action game called Saber Run in July, the game looks really neat... but you can't always believe what you see.

Nihon Bussan

Another sequel, as Nihon are to release Super F-1 Circus 2 on 12meg cartridge for July. The popular racing game will be taking a different view from its predecessors — with a higher third person 3D view... like the view from a helicopter following behind it. This different view looks great, as not only can you see what's ahead of you, but behind you too — it looks very realistic.

Electronic Arts

As you might have read, EA are working on the sequel to Desert Strike for the MD, called Jungle Strike. And, well... you can guess... the 16meg game will also be converted to the SF very soon after. It looks fabulous.

However, coming a lot sooner from EA will be their shoot 'em up, platform adventure featuring an alien robot, called B.O.B. The game was produced by Grey Matter, the people responsible for the awful THQ World. So can Grey Matter redeem themselves? Surely EA couldn't put their name on a bad product! The game has just landed in the EB com field, so check out the full review in the next issue!

Seika

Not a company that you think of for producing SF games, but their next title looks likely to become a mega-hit; it's Super Turco, an ultra-slick, mega improved version of the original Amiga action shoot 'em up adventure. It features some totally awesome graphics, Dolby sound, super special effects and, if it has the same gameplay as the original, you can be sure it'll be a must buy! It opened to great reviews in the States and will be out as you read this. Check out the full review real soon in EB.

Sony Imagesoft

Spoil the streets for your SF from Sony's Brain Stoker's Dracula. As you know, the game is based on the hit movie of the same name. You might have seen 'count' less screen featuring the extremely groovy Mega-CD version featuring this SF version is nothing like it. In fact, the game which is developed by the Beast, with similar graphics and what looks to be a preview of the game... Check out next issue for a full review.

Or should that be Storm have a whole line-up of games for the SF, including James Pond's Crazy Sports (a conversion of Aquatic Games) set for release in September, Trailblazers (the crazy platformer game) available in July, Lawn Mower Man 2 (based on the forthcoming sequel mowser and Pinball Dreams (based on the popular Amiga pinball game) - not available until the first quarter of '94.

Sales Curve**Capcom**

If you read the News section, you'll know that Capcom's big news is the conversion of Street Fighter II - Hyper Fighting (Turbo) Edition to the SF.

Sunsoft

With a stack of games in production for the SF already, Sunsoft have also got the licence to SNK's Neo Geo game, World Heroes. This beat 'em up will be released on a 16meg cartridge and is available in July.

Early screen shots of the game look to be a bit rough - let's hope they can improve on Takara's efforts in converting Fatal Fury. As football in Japan has soared in popularity due to the formation of the new J League (and possibly the signing of Gary 'I've never been booked' Lineker), Sunsoft are to release a new soccer game for the SF in the coming months on 16meg cart. The game will be in the three-quarter top-down perspective, as used in RPGs, as used

One of the best Tennis games around is Namco's World Tennis on the PC Engine; Namco are to convert the little game to the Super Famicom under the original title of Super World Court. Early screen shots of the game look very similar to its Engine counterpart and, as you'd expect, it's four player compatible with the Super Tap.

Namco are also to release a soccer game called J League Soccer on 8meg cartridge for August. Like it's 16meg games nowadays, it's a left/right Football Champ lookalike.

Namco**WORLD HEROES ON SF**

... goes, it doesn't look too bad. On the subject of soccer... the

Toshiba EMI

As mentioned a few issues back, Toshiba are to produce a game based on the movie Back to the Future II. Well, it's coming on nicely and latest news is that the 8meg game will be available in July. It will be a big arcade style adventure set in the future where you control Marty, equipped with hoverboard, to sort out all his time problems. Looks rather cool.

System Sacom

The Super Famicom does not currently have a Spy Hunter style racing game. But this new SF producer is set to change that with the release a one or two player race game on 8meg around late June or early July. The game has you in control of a car, viewed top-down, and strictly moving upwards like Spy Hunter... while cars and other vehicles try to take you out. There are bridges to jump, trucks that spray out bullets, lories for you to drive in for repairs, and possibly weapons.

THIS MONTH'S CELEBRITY PROFILE**NAME:****AGE:****OCCUPATION:** Supermodel

Reviewer/Brilliant Author (Super Player's Guide); Zelena

FAVOURITE CONSOLE GAMES:

SF: Street Fighter II, Cyberiator, Tiny Toons, Mario Kart, Parodius

MFC: Sonic (1+2), Super Smash Bros., Streets of Rage (1+2)

PC: Gate of Thunder, Virtua Fighter, Download: Banhed

FAVOURITE COIN-OP'S: Street

Fighter II (all editions), Virtua Reality (Heavy Metal), G-Loc, R360 ("I'm still crazy from that year"), Metal Hammer

FAVOURITE GAME MUSIC: Streets of Rage (1+2), Chris Hulstook, Amely, Parodius, Cyberiator, SFII (Guitar's, Ken's), Sogarai

FAVOURITE NON-GAME MUSIC: Almost anything hot-hard-core music

FAVOURITE FILMS: Terminator 1+II, Alien, Aliens, Star 3, Mad Max

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMMES:

Police Squad, 2 Point 4 Children, Harry Enfield, EastEnders, Girls, Hale + Pace, "Bad Influence", and "The Young Ones"

LIKES: Farmboy, Nintendo, Konami, Capcom, SEGA, anime, comics and ANIME!

DISLIKES: British animation and all the s*** 'Fam' games that we put out (Bungles also!)

GREATEST AMBITION: To know how to be the boozes on SF!

GREATEST PERSONAL QUALITY:

"I am extremely modest" "I'm pretty

FAVOURITE PAINTING: "A nice colour!"

DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S DEATH CELEBRITY PROFILE - YET ANOTHER WORLD EXCLUSIVE IN EB 36

PC ENGINE SOFTWARE NEWS

Working Design

If you are into strategy war games, then look out for Vasteel on CD-ROM from Working Design. This is a conversion of the rather nifty Japanese game that's similar in style to Hudson's Earth Light on the SF. For one or two players.

Konami

Following the release of Snatcher and Gradius II, the best games producers haven't announced any definite new titles for the PC Engine. However, they have stated that there are six possible titles on the cards, including Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Gradus III, Castlevania and Contra. Which of these will come first, and when is another matter. Hopefully more new next month.



Shogakukan

From the publishers of the excellent Monthly PC Engine magazine, Shogakukan are releasing a second CD preview CD, the CD-ROM Capsule 2. (The first was released a few months ago, with Wings of Thunder, Crest of Wolf, etc.). The new CD should be available now; it features seven pre-view games, plus the PC Engine database, which of course is all in Japanese. The games on the CD will have samples of the new Wonderboy title, Bonk III (PC Kid 3), a multi-player quiz game featuring 999 questions, Wings of Thunder, Monster Maker, Gunbuster Vol 2 and Sherlock Holmes 2. Cost will be 2,900 yen (£18). Unfortunately, as far as we know, no one in the UK stocked the first CD-ROM Capsule, so it will be hard to get a copy — unless you get it direct from Japan.



Nihon's next game for the Engine will be J League Greatest Eleven, a football game very much like Taito's Football Champ or Tecmo's Soccer. As with other Engine sport games, it can be played by up to four players. Out as you read this on a meg HuCard looks pretty good.

If you like the Ninja Gaiden games, then you'll be interested to know that Nihon Bussan are working on a similar style game for the Engine on Super CD format. Looks really good, with the usual sword, shurikens and different magic — but no release date yet.

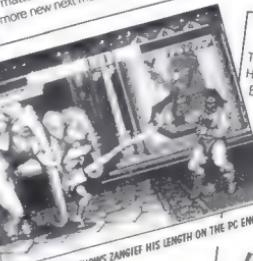
Nihon Bussan



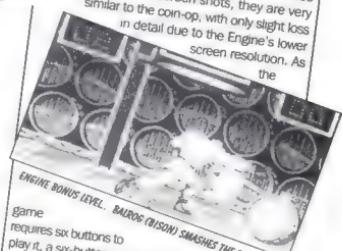
NHON'S LATEST SIMULATION... NOT RACING CARS BUT SOCCER

NEC HE

The biggest news on the engine front is that NEC Home Electronics are to release the Championship Edition of Street Fighter II for the machine. The game will be out this month on a whopping 20meg HuCard, making it the biggest game on ROM available for any machine! And it will only cost £9,800 (approx £60), the same price as the Super Famicom game. The game is close to completion and looks every bit as good as the coin-op! As you can see from the screen shots, they are very similar to the coin-op, with only slight loss in detail due to the Engine's lower screen resolution. As the



STII - DHALSIM SHOWS ZANGIE HIS LENGTH ON THE PC ENGINE



ENGINE BONUS LEVEL: BAIRD (BISON) SMASHES THE BARRELS

game requires six buttons to play it, a six-button pad will be available at £3,980 (£24) when the game is released; it's likely that the game will use the same control method as Hudson's Fighting Street if you only have a standard controller. As you might expect, the game moves to be selected and played against each other in the two different colour schemes. As for the bonus stages, like the SF game it will have two — one will be the car smashing, while the other will be the barrel smashing... as in the coin-op.

Data West

Data West's most popular games in Japan are their interactive graphic adventures using their DAPS (Data Active Picture System) program. With "AYA" already released, their next will be Orgel, another of their detective games. Hopefully the Yanks will get around to converting some of these to the TG-16/DUO soon.

HAND HELD SOFTWARE NEWS

Game Boy/Elite

Following Dr. Franken on the Game Boy, Elite are soon to release a sequel. Dr. Franken II will be another massive arcade platform adventure game. If you liked the original, then this will be for you.



Game Boy/Hudson Soft

After converting Capcom's bubble popping game Pang! to the PC Engine, Hudson are now set to convert it to the Game Boy. Considering the simplicity of the game, it should convert extremely well. Hudson are also to convert their hit NES title Milon's Secret Castle to the GB.

Game Gear/Domark

As well as converting the 16-bit title James Bond 007, Domark are to convert EA's excellent helicopter shoot 'em up game Desert Strike to the Game Gear. We can't wait to see this one!! Domark have Team Williams Grand Prix in the works too.

Game Boy/Tradewest

Mention Tradewest and the game you will instantly think of is Super Off Road and — surprise, surprise — this game is to be converted to the little machine. But will it be more fun than their own (although produced by Rare) RC Pro Am?

More interesting, however, is that there will be a sequel to the Battletroops for the Game Boy — you can be sure this will be a knockout! Called Battletroops in Ragnarok's World, the game looks very much like a conversion of the original 8-bit NES title. Available as you read this in the US.



Game Gear/Tradewest

The tools will be coming to the Game Gear! Battletroops will probably be a direct conversion of the SNES title to the GG, once again they will set off to rescue their friends and put a stop to the Devil Queen. Also expect a conversion of Tradewest's other beat 'em up heroes, Double Dragon...!

Game Gear/Sega

Sega seem to be converting most of their best Mega Drive titles to their hand-held: Sonic, Streets of Rage next will be their fishy game, Ecco the Dolphin. GG Ecco should have the same gameplay as the original, but with cut down levels.

Another biggie will be Bare Knuckle II (Streets of Rage II). Like the previous conversion, one hero will be missing — this time Max has been given the boot; but you will still have the choice of Axel, Blaze and Skate. Music will again be provided by Yuzo Koshiro. It's hope that the game can be linked for a two player option.

Other conversions from the 16-bits includes Home Alone (can it be as bad?), Evander Holyfield's Real Deal Boxing (can it be as boring?) and Tailspin (can it be as dull?). Plans are also afoot to release GG Aleste II, the sequel to the vertical shoot 'em up game for the Game Gear. Maybe this one will be better than the original...



STREETS OF RAGE 2...
MAY NOW DROPPED

Game Boy/Konami

Konami's next selection includes Batman: Animated Series, Top Gun: Guts & Glory and Zen: Intergalactic Ninja.

Game Boy/Sony Imagesoft

More conversions come in the form of the crazy caveman, Chuck Rock. If it can manage the same gameplay as the 16-bit versions, then this should be worth checking out!

Game Gear/US Gold

After producing Strider 2 for the Mega Drive (see review in this issue), US Gold are converting it to the Game Gear too. Considering how bad the 16-bit version is, we really can't see this game being any better!!

EB'S REVIEW RATING SYSTEM

This is how we work out our game ratings...

VIDEO: How nice game looks — presentation, graphics, scrolling etc. Not always a measure of how amazing it looks, but more a view of how well the graphics suit the game itself.

AUDIO: How it sounds in terms of music, sound effects and speech and, again, how well these suit the actual game — eg. a fast paced shoot 'em up with melodic tunes would be...

PLAYABILITY: Generally, how fun and satisfying to play.

LASTABILITY: Is it a game you can complete and all you likely to have back for replay?

OVERALL: The bottom line rating, higher the better.

THE EB CODE OF PLAY

Video game consoles are generally aimed at younger kids and so most games feature a difficulty setting. Here's what we review games:

1. **THE EASY SETTING IS BLOODY BAD** because it's only for wimps. Games played are always based on NORMAL and HARD settings. None of this "The game is too easy, I completed it in one day on EASY mode" business — unlike certain magazines we could mention!

2. **CONTINUES (extra credits)** are good for wimps. The above also applies.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

We also tend to refer to consoles by their original names. For example, the Super Famicom is sold in the UK as the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES). If you go to America, you will find that the Sega Mega Drive is called the Genesis. And in South Korea the Game Boy is always referred to as the Spewing Gravity (OK, so I made that bit up).

EXHAUST HEAT 2

SUPER FAMICOM BY SETA - JAPAN

you can move on to F3000, and then on to the big boys and Formula 1.

Before you begin racing, you can invest some of your starting money in development. You can set aside a certain amount for tyres, engines, front and rear wings. Unfortunately, exactly how much money it takes the engineers to develop a new piece of kit is unknown, but if you have splashed out enough, after a race you can equip yourself with better parts.

You can select any of the eight courses, all but one of which require an entrance fee — the more the cost, the greater the winnings! You can also select the number of laps for qualifying rounds and in the race itself.



Dan. The original Exhaust Heat was a decent enough racing game, let down by one or two flaws — such as slow down, empty-looking courses and the lack of a real challenge.

This sequel immediately promised to improve on the first by having faster and more detailed graphics and a great number of courses.

The first time you play this game, you will notice the speed. Seta certainly didn't waste their time developing a DSP, as it allows this game to run amazingly fast. The effect is superb and really draws you into the game. Unfortunately (and surprisingly) the game still slows down a little when the screen gets busy. This isn't significant enough to hamper the gameplay — it's just something I didn't expect to see.

There are one or two minor criticisms I could make of this game's visuals. For example, the wheels on the Formula 3000 and Formula 1 cars are clearly visible but not animated (though you only notice this when watching the game, not when playing yourself). The courses all look rather too similar and there are hardly any road-side sprites



FORMULA 1... "GET OUT OF THE B**** WAY!"

to add depth to the graphics (an effect which worked so well

in Mano Kart).

Though the visuals have been considerably improved, the gameplay is very similar to the original. The new game is more difficult than the first, but it can hardly be considered challenging until the Formula 1 cars make an appearance. Then things get more difficult — although I have to admit that racing games are hardly my forte and a real fan might still find it too easy.

The method by which the car is upgraded has been altered. Instead of simply buying the upgrades you can

afford, you pay to have them developed. Although this seems like an interesting idea, it doesn't add much to the game.

If the last couple of sentences sound a little negative, then perhaps I should set the record straight: I do like this game. It's very playable and surprisingly addictive. I've been playing it quite often over the past couple of days.

Only now that I've been through all the races in the Formula 1 season do I find that my interest is beginning to wane a little. Lastability is therefore a little suspect.

Despite one or two flaws, Exhaust Heat 2 is a fine sequel. It looks much better than the original, plays slightly better and sounds fairly similar. The techno-ish tunes in this game are groovy, but not as good as the music in



THE DEADLY CORNER

the original; the SFX are very similar.

The game could have been brilliant if it had included a two player mode. Even so there's enough here to recommend it anyway.

Although Exhaust Heat 2 looks and plays like the original, the set-up is different. You start the game in the Group 3 class; these cars are like ones in Formula 3 or Le Mans. You must win all eight tracks before



Onn. This is the first Seta game to chip — so how does it fare?

Firstly, when everyone moaned about how the original Exhaust Heat slowed down a lot, I personally didn't find it too much of a problem. Instead my main complaint was that it was way too easy. Winning the championship didn't present much of a challenge.

The sequel is very much like the original Exhaust Heat, but of course the speed is now constant — no slow down here. And when you are going top speed, the 3D Mode 7 really moves! The graphics are good, but nothing terrific, and sound is the same.

As for gameplay, it's a lot harder than the original. Getting past the computer cars is generally fairly easy, but some of their drivers are real maniacs, bumping and knocking you out of the way. But there are some irritating things about this game; for example, if you take the lead before the last lap and you then make a single mistake, the closest computer car will rip past you to claim first place — usually bumping you first, thus slowing you down so that another car passes you to take second place! So either take the lead early on so that you can carve out a big gap from the other cars, or get pole position on the very last lap.

As I write this review, I've only managed to reach F3000 — a week after getting the game. So it is quite a challenge (although this wasn't helped by Dan "accidentally" erasing my save game!!). Exhaust Heat 2 feels very much like F-Zero because of the speed and the way you can skid around the corners. It's nowhere near as much fun as Mano Kart, but the action is fast paced, very exciting and extremely challenging — making this one a great car racing game! Once you have kitted out your car, getting to Formula 1 is fairly easy, but actually winning the championship is a tad more difficult.

Exhaust Heat 2 could have been a lot better — for example by having a few circuits with jumps, speed pads, water, etc. All in all it's not a must buy, but if you like race games like F-Zero, then this one's definitely worth checking out!



THE LOST VIKINGS

SUPER FAMICOM BY INTERPLAY - USA

Marc: For a game with main characters, starting off with a piece of dance music does seem a bit off the wall but that's exactly what happens here.

The programmers of Lost Vikings obviously couldn't really decide whether they wanted it to be a puzzle game or an arcade adventure, so they've opted for a sort of mongrel incorporating both game styles.

The game has you taking control of 3 Vikings and the aim of each level is simply to get all 3 of them to the exit. Each Viking has different abilities and to complete each stage you must work together using these abilities to progress.

One of the Vikings is fast and can perform headbutts (which are useful for knocking down walls), one is fat and carries a shield (handy for blocking shots) and the last is a little bearded character who carries a sword and bow and arrows (he's the only one who

can actually kill enemies).

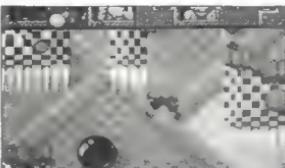
On the first few levels you are spoon fed about how to actually play the game; you press buttons which pop up information screens, telling you which controls do what, what uses items have etc., etc. This is not compulsory (you don't have to hit the buttons) but it is quite handy when you are starting out with the game. These buttons also pop up throughout the game when a new facility/item comes into play and you can then get a quick description of what to do.

The graphics aren't bad at all, but they're not really anything particularly special, being more functional than pretty. The music in the game falls into a rather large trap—it is very nice but extremely short and repeats far too soon, making you reach for the volume in no time at all. Also, the tunes do not change with each level and they are totally out of character with the game. Sound effects are usually drowned out by the music.

Gameplay is mildly original and the ability

to switch between the 3 characters at any time is quite novel. However, The Lost Vikings does have the ability to become absolutely infuriating, particularly when one of your Vikings is killed midway through a long level and, because that Viking has a skill which you need to progress, you must restart. What a pain!

Throughout the game little pieces of dialogue appear (i.e. when the Vikings com-



HOW TO BLOW UP A VIKING! ONE MEMBER DEAD NO CHANCE

plete a level) and this is quite a laugh—with loads of insults thrown in for good measure. Completing a level often takes a bit of thought and you must always make use of all the Vikings' abilities in order to get anywhere.

On the whole though, The Lost Vikings is a more solid arcade puzzler that fans of the more thoughtful game might appreciate. I only said MIGHT.

NIGEL MANSELL'S F1 CHALLENGE

SUPER FAMICOM BY GREMLIN GRAPHICS/INFOCOM

Marc: Despite the fact that Nigel Mansell has now left F1 to race Indy Cars instead, Gremlin Graphics and Infocom have released this timely excursion into racing games using good old Nigel's name to pull in the punters. So is it another sad cash-in??? Actually, no!

After a gratuitous digitised picture of Mr Mansell, you are bombarded with a whole stack of options (as is usual with these F1 games) and, for the connoisseurs of the racing genre, you can fiddle with everything from whether the readings are in MPH or KPH to tracks, weather conditions, tyres, gears and oil. There really doesn't seem to be anything that could possibly be missing.

The most major of these options is "arcade" or "simulation" mode as this has the greatest effect on how the game actually plays. If you want a more accurate game (which incidentally is a lot more stop/start), then the simulation mode is the one to go for. If, however, you prefer the all out non-stop action, then the arcade mode certainly delivers the goods.

The presentation of this game is superb

throughout, with some really slick graphics (including a wonderful spinning globe when you select a track) and all the GP drivers are here (with their actual names, not silly made up ones!).

The game itself is without a doubt the best F1 game on the SF to date, and although the programmers have opted not to use Mode 7 to handle the visuals, they have produced some exceptionally fast and realistic 3D which is far, far better than that seen in Top Racer. The overall effect is very impressive indeed—this is also a good title to show off the SFC.

There doesn't seem to be any cop-out with roadside features (the usual trade-off being speed or detail) so there are loads of trees, advert hoardings and banners etc. lining the tracks—not to mention some great tunnels.

On the sound side, the title music is very nicely done and there are little ditties scattered throughout (i.e. when you finish a race, or at pit stops etc.); at other times



FAST 3D RACING WITH MANSELL - WATCH THE WALL!

there is just the engine whine to keep you company. Fortunately this isn't as ear piercing as the usual F1 games and although it is a tad annoying, it doesn't give you a serious headache!

Well, to sum up, Nigel Mansell's F1 Challenge is definitely the best F1 game on the machine and it sits comfortably behind Mano Kart and F-Zero at the top of the SF race game chart. Race game fans would be well advised to check this out as it is a far superior product to all the recent F1 efforts (Aguri Suzuki, Human GP, F1 Hero, etc.). Good stuff!

WONDERDOG

MEGA DRIVE/SEGA-CD BY VICTOR/CORE DESIGN



David. What do you get if Britain's finest platform creators are let loose on a Sega CD for three months? (Fire and Ice with better sound?)

Ed.) Probably the best game available for the unit, that's what.

Instead of redoing their old games (as they did with Chuck Rock and Wolf Wild), Core have started from scratch and created a video character to rival Sonic and Mario. The story has our hero blasted from his home world in a bone-ship to a "safer" planet called Earth. Although he looks like a normal, cute dog, on Earth he has super powers and, after being befriended by a boy (who is forced to leave him by his dad), decides to return to his planet and rid them of the evil Pitbully army.

All this is laid out in a lengthy cartoon intro that is hilarious to watch especially when he is showing off his powers. In fact it's almost a shame to start the game!

The game itself is a huge platform romp over different areas of Earth and, eventually, the moon and his home world. The first

thing you notice is the amazing use of colour. It really looks as though the CD is displaying more colours than should be possible, although this may be down to careful shading. The backgrounds are very cartoony and quite surreal in places. All the buildings in the town ever are distorted into weird shapes, for example, and together with the

parallel backgrounds, they give a really bizarre feel.

Wonderdog's only weapon is a throwing star that can be fired at any angle by keeping the button held down. It takes a while to get used to, but means you can hit enemies above and in front with practice. He can also jump and

run, which he needs to do to dive under narrow gaps (like Tiny Toons "Dash" move) and dig in certain spots to find hidden levels underground. In fact the game is packed with these bonus levels, some hold jewels and wings (to repair damage), while others are complete multi-stage bonus games. The fun is finding them — they're well hidden.

Of course, the enemies are not going to make life easy. They range from dive bomb-



ERMM... I DIDN'T KNOW DOGS COULD CLIMB TREES

ing birds (with sound effects to match) to lumberjack bulldogs and skunks; there are dozens of different nasties on each level and they change for each stage. Most are too cute (or weird) to be called nasty, especially the end of stage bosses — such as the two rats who float above you, holding balloons while throwing custard pies at you! Everything is well animated and the attention to detail is brilliant.

For a change, the sound hasn't been skimped on either. Every stage and boss has a unique tune that you just know you're going to start humming on the bus. Sadly, the sound effects are pretty naff, apart from the surprised yelp you give out when you're hit, complete with surprised look.

It's all I can do not to marry this game. Hopefully when Sega get their act together for the British CD, this will be one of the first releases. To deny the public this gem is bordering on sadism!



DARKWING DUCK

GAME BOY BY CAPCOM - USA



David. Capcom's latest platform romp is based on the Saturday cartoon that's doing well at the moment (or so I'm told). (Oh yeah... David is Darkwing's number one fan. Ed.).

It's a multi-stage caper involving a vigilante Duck fighting crimes in different city areas against the villainous F.O.W.L. organisation. OK, so the plot's typical Disney crud, but what's the game like?

After a rather good animated intro and your mission briefing, you can choose which of three different areas you want to cover first. You are then flown into the war zone and the game begins.

The first thing that struck me is how similar it looks to Capcom's Duck Tales game. The basic platform layout and even some of

the enemies (of which there are many) have a distinct feeling of *deja vu*, and Darkwing looks suspiciously like Donald Duck in a cape but after lengthy play he reveals some new tricks.

All the graphics are excellent, from the seedy looking city streets to the dramatic animation of Darkwing and his enemies — all very imaginative, if at times hard to see. The enemies are also pretty tough, with even the simplest baddy needing two or more hits with gas to get killed. Oh, didn't I mention the gas gun Darkwing uses? It fires various types of gas, ammo for which is dropped in by parachute (a la Bionic Commando, another Capcom game).

Hmm... To defend himself, DD draws a cape over his face Dracula style.

Not only are the bad guys out to kill you — so is the scenery. At various points our hero must ride wheels over spikes, leap



DARKWING... I WONDER IF HE HAS DARK WINGS

from hooks on to tiny ledges or jump from pulley to pulley while on the move. It's all exciting James Bond type stuff I can tell you! But there's no time limit, so take it slow — then truth (and Duck kick) will prevail! Even if you are killed, there are unlimited continues to help you beat those bosses.

The in-game music is excellent and varies not only on each level, but also for each boss as well — so there's no need to touch that dial.

If you get the feeling I like this game, you're right. It's got the perfect level of difficulty, great graphics and sound and a hook like a harpoon. Now if only I could get up early enough to watch the car toon...



COTTON

PC ENGINE SUPER CD BY HUDSON SOFT - JAPAN



Onn: Cotton is a horizontal scrolling shoot 'em up of the "Cute" variety.

The fairies are in deep trouble as the evil ones have taken over their land. Only you, a little witch called Cotton, can help. But why should you risk your life saving the fairies? I certainly wouldn't! The incentive is to get some Willow (big sweets) which each of the bosses hold.耶! So like the sucker you are, you set off to fight the hordes of the evil army for some sweeties!

The game is very much like Parodius. You control Cotton on her broomstick, followed by her tiny fairy friend. Cotton can fire forwards and drop bombs. When she kills baddies (frogs, vikings, archers, etc.), gems are



COTTON ON HER BROOMSTICK MEETS VIKINGS IN EGYPT

left behind. Shooting the gems turns them different colours — yellow for points, orange for power-ups, and red and blue for special beam weapons (activated by holding down the fire button for a couple of seconds and then releasing). Unfortunately the gems don't float where they are hit, but fall to the ground — which is a pain in the butt when there isn't any ground for them to fall on!

Extra power-ups can be gained by collecting strange jars. Occasionally an enemy appears with a pot on its head; if you can shoot it, it will release an extra fairy to join you. Not only do the fairies follow you around and fire, but when they make contact with an enemy, they will stick to it and continue firing until it's killed. Also, by pressing the "bomb" button, you can fire off the fairies at enemies!

The game is quite difficult as there are masses of enemies on screen, and most of them require a number of shots before they are downed — a process that's not helped by your puny weapons. Also, one hit by anything and you are usually dead! The layout of the levels is pretty tough, with ground targets moving above — which makes hitting them quite difficult. Meanwhile sprites fly in at you from awkward angles.

The graphics are really impressive — all cute and colourful and they animate very

well, although there aren't a lot of surprises (as in Gate/Lord of Thunder or Parodius). But I do like the zombies that pop out of the ground, remove their heads and throw them at you!

Music is OK — Valis-like orchestral tracks with violins, trumpets and so on. Nice to listen to, but it doesn't improve the gameplay. Sound effects are good, but the storyline speech is very irritating as the characters talk in squeaky Japanese voices. If you've watched Project A-KO, then you'll know what I mean.

All in all, Cotton is an above average shoot 'em up: good audio/visuals, challenging gameplay and enough levels to keep you going. However the difficulty in collecting weapons and the fact that it's so easy to die flaw what could have been an excellent title. Worth getting if you've been looking for another shooter after Gate/Lord of Thunder and Parodius.

**CREST OF WOLF**

PC ENGINE SUPER CD BY HUDSON SOFT - JAPAN



Derek: I've just been reading Onn's preview of this game with his comments — "poor animation and sprite collision detection, laughable special moves and dull gameplay". Don't believe a word of it!

Crest of Wolf is a kickbox feast of pugilistic prowess (I told you not to put that thesaurus in your mouth Derek, Ed.). Here's the boring bit: it's the tired old girlfriend-gets-kidnapped-by-the-Hoods scenario, scrolling isometric beat 'em up. There are two fighters to choose from — Hawk, who's quick-fisted and agile, and Tony, a large punk who pounds the opposition to pulp. Each one has his own selection of kicks and punches, plus a throw and a special move — great for taking out enemies, but reducing your energy bar when used. But worry ye not; there

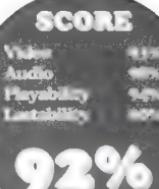
are all the usual pick-ups to replenish energy, like coke cans, chickens, etc., but sadly no weapons.

The action takes place over five long levels, with some very cool graphic effects in each. For example, on level 1-2 you get to slug it out on a moving platform — very much like World Heroes on the Neo Geo. The end of level bosses offer a varying challenge; there's a sumo wrestler

who tries to crush you and a dude with blades sticking out of his shoulder pads, who performs a rolling attack (like Blanka's in SFII).

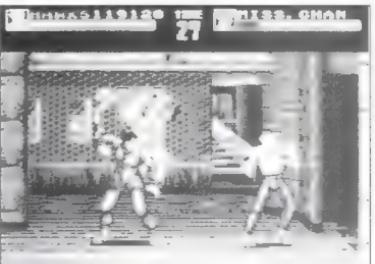
Graphics throughout are very atmospheric and detailed.

Sonically, it's a real treat, with everything from raw rock n' roll to generic oriental tunes.



SFX are also fabulous, featuring satisfying martial arts film type noises when punching or kicking and lovely thudding sounds when someone hits the deck.

Crest of Wolf borrows ideas from such classics as SFII, World Heroes and Streets of Rage, blending them into one hot game. On the down side, if you're a moron and play this on Normal or Easy with the five available credits, you won't get your money's worth. But on Hard (with one Continue), you've got a war on your hands!



HAWK MEETS TWO BADDIES. HE EASILY DISPATCHES MISS CHAN WITH CLAWS

CD OR NOT CD?

hat was the question. Until Nintendo finally ended the seemingly boundless prophesies and theories about the CD-ROM system for the Super Famicom, by deciding on concrete specifications for the machine last March. Allegedly, this is to allow developers to produce software before the unit's full-tilt launch in Japan next year.

Obviously the big lads in the U.S. got the info straight away, but could they make any sense of it? Don't be silly! It's all very well quoting numbers and telling us how "HOT" the unit will be, but I've yet to see a mainstream magazine which has interpreted the data sensibly. Magazines like EGM are really too close to the industry, and so you are very unlikely to get an honest, unbiased opinion on games, let alone on the hardware. And this is where EB comes in! Here goes:

Dimensions: 9.5" by 7.875" by 2.9"
Mass: 2 lbs 7 oz

8Mb DRAM (main)
4Mb DRAM (supplemental)
1Mb SRAM (Processor workspace)
2Mb MROM (Mask ROM with Operating system)

NEC V810 32-BIT RISC
Clock: 21.477MHz (I should hope so!)
Cache: 8Kb

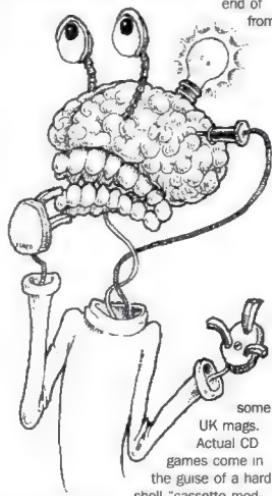
Rockwell 65C02 8-BIT (BBC Micro anyone?)
Clock: 4.295MHz (I smell a rat!)

Typical Access Time: 0.7 sec
Maximum Access Time: 1.4 sec
Read error rate: <10^-12
Data o/p speed : 150KBytes/sec.
(Nominal)
Data o/p speed : 300KBytes/sec. (2x Fast)

So what does it all mean, I hear you ask? Well, for one thing, if this info is gen up (only Nintendo can know for sure), it is definitely going to kick Sega's design right in the

b****. It also means it will perform well enough to stand up to peoples' expectations of the medium, something which has yet to be proved with the Sega CD.

These numbers just go to show how paranoid Nintendo designers have become, with absolutely tons of memory splashed about, as well as the very conspicuous 32-bit device, which I am sure we'll never hear the end of from



... some UK mags. Actual CD games come in the guise of a hard shell "cassette module" containing the CD itself, plus some SRAM (for battery backed data), a battery and a CIC chip. This is a copyrighted coding chip, as used in normal game carts to prevent them running on different countries' machines, and to stop unlicensed software from being used with the SF. It is therefore very unlikely that Jap CD games will work with US machines or the other way round, but you know what grey importers are like, and I know I will be trying just as much to sort out a solution should the need arise.

The whole CD assembly is shoved into the CD unit, which loads from the front rather like a video player. There is no drawer as in the Sega CD and other CD transport systems.

I was interested to read that a DAC (Digital to Analogue Converter) would also be used in the final design, which strongly implies compatibility with audio CDs. YES PLEASE! However this could be just for in-

game music, in which case expect some excellent quality sound to go with the graphics. Hopefully both.

To my utter amazement, a 6502 micro-processor is used — this was designed way back in late seventies and was used in Acom machines and the 8-Bit NES. Also, the SF CPU is a 65C816, which is basically a 6502 with 16-bit architecture, giving the impression that Nintendo must have a very strange relationship with Rockwell.

However, although somewhat archaic, the 65C02 is quite adequate for the job of handling data from the CD, while the rest of the set-up is busy executing game code. Ignore people who tell you the 4.295MHz clock for this is too slow, since the job of filling-up RAM from the CD requires little processing power and is certainly one up on the Sega CD which, contrary to early reports, is left naked when code needs to be processed (maybe uncompacted) before execution from the base unit. Anyway, as a matter of fact, 4.295MHz is an unbelievably fast clock speed for a 65C02 — so be sceptical when referring to these specs, unless it is of custom production for this design.

The CD Unit is obviously going to make use of the SF extension (expansion) port located beneath it, but an external fly-lead is also going to connect the System Cart to the CD Unit. This is probably a consequence of the amount of memory and special processors used in the latest (and hopefully final) design. Pity, but only a small price to pay all else considered.

The V810 has an 8Kb instruction cache, which means pretty fast code execution — even if the device were not RISC.

"Supplemental" memory? Not a standard term, so it tells us next to nothing about its purpose, or indeed how it differs from the main 8Mb chunk. However I suspect it is like a large data cache, where code from the CD, which has just been read-off and requires additional handling is stored before actual execution. Here I am speculating (you might think), but I can promise as soon as we can get our hands on a unit, you'll know the full details and what to expect from the actual hardware. Until then, I am poised with screwdriver in-hand, hoping that the price of the thing is going to be half as impressive as these specs — and with such specs, anything below US\$200-250 would be most agreeable.

DIY BLOW FUSE!

**Starts his first DIY project
for the Super Famicom —
but make sure you don't
blow your fuse!**

First a word of warning. In this issue I will be covering a few of the more technical aspects of console gear and associated hardware. I hope you will find the info interesting; however, I understand that in parts it gets pretty tough-going and you might think it is not strictly relevant to the console scene. Not so! I recommend that you persevere with it, and you'll soon find that UK media have a very limited approach to such coverage, with only 'Super Play' (way to go Mr Brookes!) making even the slightest attempt to be objective and concise. It is not likely that I will be doing this much in future issues, mainly because I hardly have the time to do small pieces — let-alone full features. But, as I will explain later on, you can be sure that as new products/developments take place, they will be receiving the full treatment — if there is any particular subject you feel needs addressing, please write in and let us know. Also, note that although my writing might seem to be biased more towards the SF, this is only in content and not in opinion and most principles apply equally to all games systems.

Last issue, we mentioned the "ZE1" screwdriver which enables SF and SNES units to be opened without damage. I've since remembered it will also do Mega Drive carts.

So far I've come across three Super Famicom units, which had the tamper-proof screws drilled out to gain access to the guts. The case was then super glued back together

making further access impossible! One was even taped together with masking tape around the edges! Don't be a twat like them — buy the proper tool that lets you open the unit without causing damage.



One reason why
you might
need to do just
that would be the

accidental/improper
use of a country
adapter. If carts are

removed with the power switched ON, the damage is often irreparable to both game and base unit. However, it is sometimes the case that carts are inserted the wrong way round, in which case an internal fuse will blow and the cart is totally

knackered. Other ways in which the fuse can be damaged include faulty peripherals connected to the controller or multi-out ports, and PAL adapters/modifications which draw too much power from the machine. If this ever happens to you, it can save you one hell of a hassle if you are equipped with the special screwdriver and a replacement fuse. Before you even think of touching the machine's internals, make sure you touch a tap or other large metal earthed object to get rid of any electrostatic charge your body might have acquired. "ESD" or ElectroStatic Discharge is the most common cause of faults in elec. equipment

and many millions of dollars are being spent on precautions against it. So CAREFUL!!

Once the casing is off, it is simply a matter of replacing the burnt fuse, which is located on the top-left hand side of the board right next to the red and black power switch leads. It is black in colour and looks like a rectangular resistor, soldered on to the board. Note there is actually no board underneath it, with a cut-out where the fuse occupies space. The device is marked 1.5A and it is very obvious once you actually get to look at the board. If you are unsure of the job, don't do it! A friendly TV repair technician will be more than happy to do it for you, as long as you provide him with the special driver, as he is very unlikely to have one in the kit. An unfriendly one will probably tell you to take a running jump, so be nice if you want to get anywhere with them. Alternatively, get a replacement fuse from TANDY or similar ("1.5 Amps, 20mm, Fast blow") and get a friend who can help with the job. It should only take a couple of minutes, but make sure you have a low power soldering iron handy and that you are not in fact a gibbering idiot with an IQ less than 30.

The repair is not actually as difficult as it may first appear — if I can do it anybody can — and it can save a lot of time instead of sending the unit off for repair. Also, would you trust them to do a proper job? I've seen at least two units which have had work done to them at a certain place, with just a thick jumper wire used instead of a fuse! Not recommended.

Anyway, if you've had any problems with last issue's address (unsurprising considering the nature of the product), try Electromail whose address appears below. On the other hand, you can try sending us an interesting letter on the subject of hardware, and you just might find one perfectly formed ZE1 turning up at your door. Hmmm...

Electromail
PO Box 33 (it's OK I can assure you!)
Corby
Northants
NN17 9EL
Tel: 0536 204555
Fax: 0536 405555
"Tamper-proof screwdriver ZE1, stock code: 541-983"

Cost is around £7 plus all the trimmings. You could try "Farnell" if you want, in which case they'll probably ask for just over forty quid!



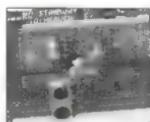
WAYNE'S WORLD

SUPER FAMICOM BY T*HQ - USA



Onn: I thought the film Wayne's World was pretty terrible (apart from the great Queen track), although it did spark off a number of catch phrases which stuck in your mind forever — "Excellent!", "Extremely Close Up!", "I'm not worthy!", "...NOT!" and so on. And this T*HQ game, produced by Gray Matter (the people responsible for the utterly dire James Bond Jr) is absolutely excellent... NOT! In other words a load of Carp Rotting Alongside Pigswill.

The game's a side-on platform shooter. Wayne, armed with a guitar, has to jump around blasting the alien nasties, avoiding the electric currents and other traps, collecting the useful items and eventually rescue his friend, Garth, who has been kidnapped. The



WAYNE DODGES A DEADLY BARGE

whole game is just this a lot of jumping around with nothing much else and after a few minutes it gets very boring indeed.

Graphically... the digitised stills are awful, although Wayne's sprite looks neat with that annoying, grinning smile on his face all the time. However, animation is at its minimum and the rest of the graphics are very basic — some of the enemy sprites look as if a six-year-old has created them.

Musically, it's below average: a continuous electric guitar piece. Sound effects are no better — the usual "boing" and "ping". However the samples are OK, even though they are extremely annoying once you've heard them a few times. Each time you are hit you get "NOT!", and each time you die you get "Not Worthy!" repeated. Other samples

include a "babe" that says "Hi Wayne", and when you pick something up it's "Excellent" or "Schwing!" all very irritating.

So, what we basically have is another T*HQ game that should be bundled with a shovel, so that you can dig a hole in your garden to bury it (or yourself) if you were daft enough to buy it. Only for people who eat, sleep Wayne's World. Not Worthy!

Oh yeah... I must also mention that on the intro the twosome list the top ten worst games on their show — I was shocked not to see

"Wayne's World" in the number one spot!!

SCORE

25%

POP 'N' MAGIC

PC ENGINE CD BY TELENET - JAPAN



Derek: This is a platform shoot/throw 'em up (Throw 'em up? That's a new one, Ed.) in the same mould as Don Doko Don and Bubble Bobble.

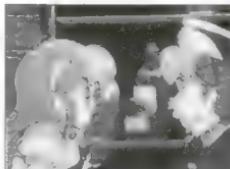
The game is either one or two player and you take the parts of who else — two cutesy sprites called Pop 'n' Magic.

The idea is to blast the baddies w/ your power wands; they then turn into bubbles that you can pick up and throw at other bubbles of different colours to acquire lots of fruit (points) or power ups. You can also pick up the hapless baddies and toss them around the screen; they too will throw out the aforementioned power ups, etc. After ten screens, you come to the inevitable end

of level boss. Some of these are really great — like the unicycling, plate-spinning rabbit and the two dragons. Defeat these and it's on to the next world and more of the same.

Each world takes a different theme, with a new set of monsters, etc. Check out world three, beach/sea — brilliant! Graphics are excellent and colourful, with some very neat effects on later worlds. The gameplay gets amazingly intense with masses bouncing around on screen — and no slow down or flicker!

One thing I must give a special mention to are the animated story sequences before the game and between worlds. They are the best I have seen: full screen cartoons of the highest quality (shame the speech is in Japanese). Music is fabulous and it's all



THE CUTE ANIMATED SEQUENCE

SCORE

89%

played from the CD; SFX are adequate and are mainly Engine generated.

This is one addictive game. The more you play, the more you're gonna want to play. My mate Nick thought it was more like Pop & Tragic when he first had a go — now I can't get him off the damned thing! Unoriginal it is out, if you don't have the likes of D.O.D. and want to see some gorgeous animated sequences, buy it! Nice one, Riot.

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PCE: Image Fight II, PC Kid 3

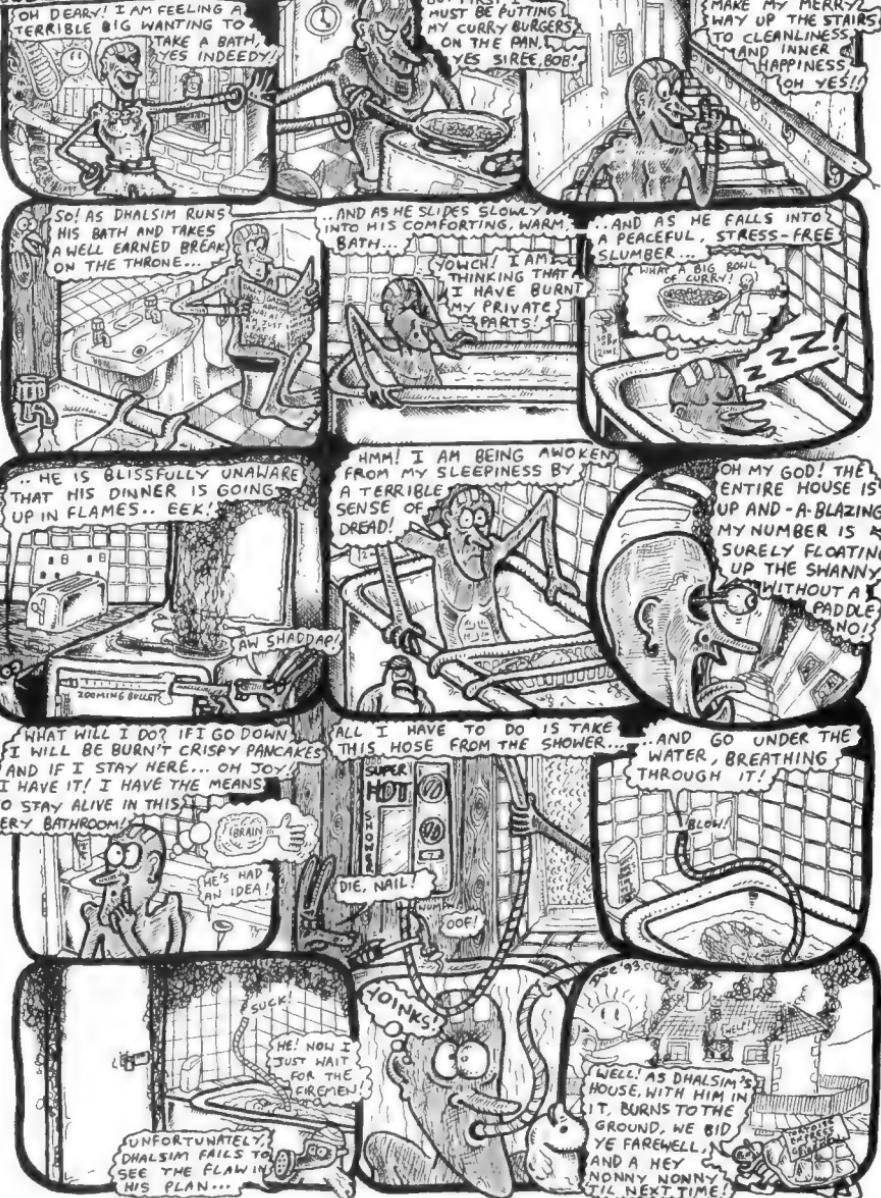
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DHALSIM TAKES BATH By Dee



X-MEN**MEGA DRIVE BY SEGA OF AMERICA - USA**

Onn: Last issue I commented that this Sega of America game could be quite good... but the Yanks have done it yet again! They've taken Chakan, or should I say Batman Returns, changed the graphics and sound and tweaked around the gameplay... and came up with X-Men.

X-Men is another arcade platform game. You (and a fellow mate if in two player mode) have four members of the X-Men team to complete the game, one member per life. They include Wolverine, Cyclops, Nightcrawler and Gambit (why is Gambit always included in the X-Men games? He's a right dork). Each of the mutants have their own powers and special abilities. For example, Wolverine can sustain less damage due to his healing abilities and, while his standard attack is to use his bare fists, he can bring out his metallic claws for extra slicing! Although the weaker of the four, Nightcrawler is the most athletic and has teleportation special powers.

As well as the four mutants, you can also call up the help of another

four other mutants if you get in a tricky situation. For example, you can call in Iceman, who zooms in and creates an ice floor, or Storm to literally blow everyone away!



CYCLOPS SPIES SOME SPEAR THROWERS



ICEMAN MAKES A BRIDGE

Apart from these "mutant" features, the game follows the usual platform adventure format. Generally you move left to right, jumping on platforms, avoiding deadly spikes, dodging or taking out the enemies (who are armed with spears, guns, etc.). Halfway through each level you'll meet a baddie, the first being the Juggernaut; once you reach the end of the level, you'll meet another baddie.

Graphically, the game is very much like Chakan and Batman Returns... very average backdrops and sprites... horrible use of stipple shading and colour, and with fairly poor animation. Some of the backdrops are so poorly shaded that it's difficult to tell if there are entrances to what looks like a dead end.

As with the previous games, it's fairly awkward to play. Falling off a platform is very easy to do — especially when controlling Nightcrawler, as he dives forward when you press a button. And as all the heroes have short range attacks, it's doubly hard to get far into the game. So you tend to avoid all the baddies or jump into them and, hopefully, hit them before they can hit you first. It's like playing Super Shinobi with only 10 shinkans — so having to use his sword most of the time!

I have to admit, having played this game a fair old bit, I haven't exactly got very far into it yet — not that I wanted to either!

All in all, X-Men is another Sega US game that could have been great — if only they had put more time into it. Worth checking out, probably better than both Chakan and Batman Returns, but still nowhere near as good as Super Shinobi.

**MCDONALD'S TREASURE LAND ADVENTURE**
MEGA DRIVE BY SEGA

Onn: After Global Gladiators, I thought that was the last we'd see of Ronald McDonald and his disgusting burgers — but here's the blighter again in another Mega Drive game! Watch out for Burgerbar Fighter II and Space MacGherkins from the Depths of Hell.

The game is a platform adventure, a bit like Global Gladiators in many ways, but on a slower pace and with more puzzle elements and greater variety. As you can guess, Ronald has to go around collecting burgers, shakes, fries, "M" signs and so on; the main objective is to locate three pieces of a treasure map, held by some giant nasty vegetables. These you meet at the end of each level — you must dispatch them with your magic... rather tricky!

Each level comprises several stages; they range from normal platform stuff (as in Global Gladiators) to caves with

giant rolling boulders and gushing water to avoid, a moving train with an excellent section where ballet dancers twinkle (a bit Twilight Zone here!!) and more. There are a host of different baddies to take out with your magic dust — live vegetables, clowns on balls

and
other cir-

cus related

performers, big

birds and fishes, claw-

ing lions in cages, and so

on. Along the way, you can also

collect bags of gold, which you can

cash in at McDonald bars scattered around each level. These increase your health and power up your magic, as well as buying extra lives. In fact you can buy quite a number of extra lives in one game! I think I bought around 15 in all!!! This makes

the game pretty easy, although the bosses are rock hard — unless I'm tackling them wrongly!!!

Graphically, this game is quite brilliant: the backgrounds are very cute and colourful, with neat parallax, and the sprites are great — especially Ronald himself. Animation is good, though not brilliant. Sound is very jolly as you might expect and can get up your nostrils after a while. FX are average.

All in all, McDonald's Treasure Land is a great game and falls in the Tiny Toons category — not excellent, not a must buy, but definitely worth checking out! As this is a preview and not a full review (the game I played wasn't a complete version) McDonald's Treasure Land Adventure can only get better.

The game was programmed by Treasure, a talented new Japanese team of 7. They are also working on another title for Sega, a two player Midnight Wanderers style action adventure, which is also looking brilliant! Watch out for more from them!

DEAD DANCE

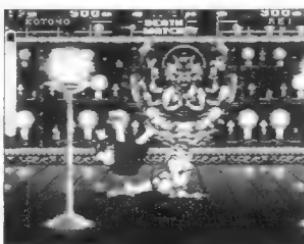
SUPER FAMICOM BY JALECO - JAPAN



Marc I was beginning to think Street Fighter II was the be all and end all of beat 'em ups. Considering the relatively poor quality of these games since SFII (Combatribes, Double Dragon, Rushing Beat Run, Power Athlete, Fist of the North Star, Brass Boss, etc., etc., etc.), you can see why. So when yet another of these games arrived for review, I started to play it expecting yet more of the same.

To say I was pleasantly surprised is an understatement!

So what makes Dead Dance better than



A FOOT SWEEP TAKES OUT THE DEADLY OPPONENT

all the other pretenders to SFII's crown? I guess quality has to be the first answer, followed by superb gameplay.

Dead Dance, like SFII, comes on a whopping 16 meg cartridge. Although this is certainly no guarantee of quality (Golden Fighter does spring to mind!), here the extra space does seem justified.

Of course Dead Dance IS a SFII "derivative" (that's "np off" in software company talk!), but it really makes no attempt to try to hide it.

Right from the intro, with its hard rock music and scene setting graphics, through to the player selection and options, Dead Dance is extremely slickly presented. There's no waiting around here; you just select your options and players and it's into the action

— straight in for a punch up!!

You can choose to be one of four players (their descriptions may sound a tad familiar!): Syoh - young karate expert, Zaki - bald-headed hard man, Vortz - large wrestler or Kotano - the token woman (who as it happens is very quick).

Your opponents number six to start with. They are all pretty different from any characters we've seen before. There's a punk in high heels (honest!) who goes into fitting frenzies, a guy on stilts who carries a rocket launcher, a karate kid, a masked wrestler, a ninja who performs magic and a tall character who has long metal arms. All these characters have their own unique moves, special attacks and weapons and their fights take place on their own individual levels — each with a different backdrop and musical score.

The graphics are very, very good indeed. From the presentation screens up front, to the excellent backdrops (complete with little bits of animation) and the superbly drawn and wonderfully animated characters themselves, this is a very visually pleasing game. The sprites aren't as large as those in SFII, but they are still a decent size on screen and they do look very detailed and well drawn (maybe even nicer than Capcom's game).

The accompanying music is also superb, with a range of hard rock tunes playing, plus the odd mellow piece here and there. Some great (sampled) instrument sounds are used and even the sound effects are good for a game of this type.

There are 3 basic modes of play: 1p vs computer (you choose who you are and who you fight), 1p vs 1p (you both choose who you are and fight head to head), and "story mode" (you choose your character and then must fight the computer players in a specific order).

The action throughout is very quick and there are no long pauses in between bouts (unlike SFII). A novel feature is the action replay at the end of a bout: here you can fast forward or rewind the last remaining seconds of a fight to see exactly what went wrong/right. This is, of course, totally pointless but it is a laugh for a while.

So, the crunch question: is it better than SFII? Well, er, well, er... almost! It's hard to put a finger on what exactly is better about SFII — maybe it's because it's so familiar to everyone. For me SFII just gets the edge. Having said that, Dead Dance is absolutely superb and I would highly recommend it to anyone who has tired of SFII or who just wants a new challenge.

A veritable treat for all beat 'em up fans and an excellent game in its own right.



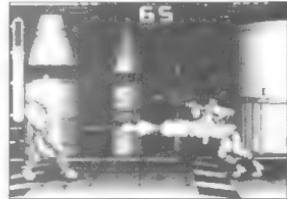
Onn:

This looked like a very good version of a Street Fighter II clone and, when I had a quick go, it played like a very good Street Fighter II clone. However, when I figured out how to perform a few of the special moves, I played the story game and completed it with only one continue (the ninja with the sword is a bit tough — more like a night cheat!). No challenge at all, unless you play in hard mode where the computer cheats a lot, countering most moves you make.

The graphics are fairly good but nothing special. The sprites (fighters) range from very good (the army guy with bazooka and knife is excellent) to rather poor (like the wrestlers).

Animation isn't too hot — definitely not enough frames! Soundwise, there are some very good pieces of music but, unfortunately, they don't fit in well with the game. Sound FX are limited, with very little use of hard hitting samples.

As for the gameplay, it's fairly reasonable. But it's very much like other Jaleco games (eg,



THE BRILLIANT DOLLY ARMY DUDE WITH ROCKET LAUNCHER

Rushing Beat Run) and once again the collision detection is a bit iffy at times. And you only have a few moves. The computer opponents are also too easy to beat, as they don't tend to block certain moves. For example, a flying kick will usually be countered by the computer — but do a flying punch and it doesn't bother. Sweeps are another the key to success. And the final boss is also a doddle to take out!

Some of the special moves are difficult to perform — especially ones where you have to push forward first (so you walk forward), then back and press a button, making it very difficult to perform combinations.

The two player mode adds some interest, but with only four fighters (two of which are the same and too powerful) and the limited moves and collision detection,

this game didn't hold my interest for long. The closest SFII clone yet, but not a patch on the original. Worth a peek.

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

76%

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

90%

POP 'N' TWIN BEE

SUPER FAMICOM BY KONAMI - JAPAN



Marc: Every Konami game is something of an event on the SF. They rarely (never?) produce a duffer and are consistently THE most innovative software house on the machine. So after Axelay and Parodius, it was with some anticipation I set about playing Twin Bee, their latest shoot 'em up....

Right from the lovely little intro you soon realise that this is vintage Konami, and Twin Bee is cute with a capital "C". Basically, Twin Bee is the vertical scrolling equivalent of Konami's brilliant Parodius and is similar in a lot of respects.

The graphics are absolutely gorgeous, with loads of colours and a wonderfully cartoon-like appeal. Konami obviously go to town with these cutesy games and this is no exception. The amount of attention to detail here is just amazing and every last sprite is lovingly animated — you often find your eyes wandering to look at something whilst being blasted from all directions!

A very welcome addition here is a simultaneous two player option (an absolute rarity on the SF); after playing Twin Bee with a mate, you just have to ask why they haven't done this more often — it really adds a lot to the game.

I could rave on about the graphics for pages, but I'll just mention a few highlights: the superb underwater level with angel fish, nautiluses, turtles and fining seaweed; the flying level with ducks spinning around in full flight suits; the wonderful use of perspective on most of the levels; and the extra large bosses and the special Mode 7 effects (translucency, napping etc., etc.). Let's just say that Twin Bee is graphically absolutely top notch.

As is usual with Konami, the music doesn't let the graphics down and we are treated to some unbelievably cutesy tunes; they are often pretty bizarre but always incredible to listen to. Even the bosses have snisiter-istic music — and I didn't think that was possible! The sound effects are also superb with loads of ultra-cute Japanese speech and some surprisingly original spot FX for this type of game.

The power up system is identical to Parodius, with bells floating down the screen that change colour when shot. Each colour refers to a different type of power up, including 3-way shot, speed up, speed down (bummer!), wide shot and shields.

Occasionally there is just a little bit of slow down, but this is very rare (even in two player mode) and it never actually spoils the action at all.

The difficulty level is set just right (there is a meter from 1 to 10, again, like Parodius) and the normal setting (5) is perfect, allowing you to progress steadily on each go.

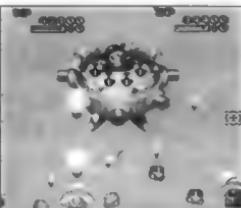
To sum up, Twin Bee is yet another incredibly technically polished game from Konami and an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans. With this and Parodius in your collection you have two of the best games of their type on any home machine. Excellent!



Dan: Although Konami are the world's best software developers, they've been a little off form lately, with a couple of Mega Drive games which were a little below their extremely high standards and Batman Returns for the SF — hardly the greatest of games. This version of Twin Bee is somewhat better, but still not quite a return to form.

One of the main problems with other versions of Twin Bee was that collecting weapons could be extremely difficult (especially with two players), as it was all too easy to shoot the bells while they were the colour you wanted. It takes quite a few shots to change the colour on this version and, by doing this, Konami have made the game far more enjoyable than the Engine and Game Boy versions. Weapon collecting aside, this version is very similar to the others, but in the usual Konami tradition the levels are different, which really makes this game worthwhile.

Visually, Pop 'n Twin Bee is just what you would expect



THE FIRST BOSS... PIRATES AT 12 O'CLOCK



Onn: I'm quite a fan of the arcade version of Twin Bee, not to mention the Engine version, so I was eager to get my hands on the latest version for the Super Famicom.

Konami have slightly modified the game in many ways and, although there are a few improvements, there are also a few bad points. On the plus side, the graphics are terrific — cute and colourful animated sprites and lavish backdrops make this a great looking game. One of the sprites is a long rippling blue caterpillar-like creature that moves up the screen — just amazing. There are also some neat effects of wavy-screens, fading graphics and others... most of which you've all seen before.

Sound, as expected, is jolly and fitting to the game, although none of the tunes are as catchy as previous Twin Bee titles. Sound FX are OK: silly voices, plus the usual explosive effects.

On the down side... the game is concentrated on air attacks, with very little need for bombing. This is emphasized by the fact that, you can never power up your bombing. Power ups are also limited to the coloured bells. Although it's easier to collect what you want, it doesn't have bad features like the original with the damaged bell or bomb. I also missed the beam-up weapon. Because of the above, there are no ground weapons to pick up either, except the hearts that increase your energy — making the game easier and less exciting.

The first time I played the game on default setting, I reached the final boss without much trouble... although he is really tough. The other bosses aren't as interesting as the coin-op/Engine versions; they're dead easy to destroy, especially with the punch.

All in all, Pop 'n Twin Bee is stunning to look at, fairly playable, but nothing special. I prefer the PC Engine game which is more interesting and challenging.



from Konami. Great backdrops (with some nice Mode 7 effects, though they have not been used as extensively as in other Konami games), brilliant use of colour and cute sprites (they're not as wacky as those in Parodius, but there's an interesting selection of fruit).

The sound, as always, is brilliant. The spot FX are great and the music is fabulous, with some wonderfully appropriate synthesized pieces. Many people only seem to appreciate sampled tunes, but game music fans will love what's on offer here.

So, Pop 'n Twinbee plays well, looks great and sounds fabulous. Inevitably though, it's just too short. It will only take a few plays to go all the way through this game and so lastability is short lived (indeed, it would be fairly easy to complete it first time in two player mode.) This fault aside, Pop 'n Twin Bee is well worth a look.

LORDS OF THUNDER

PC ENGINE SUPER CD BY HUDSON SOFT - USA



Although this game sounds like Gate of Thunder, it isn't really the sequel to what is probably the best shoot 'em up ever created... although the game IS programmed by the same team.

You play a mystic knight who must fly through seven deadly levels to defeat each of the evil mystic knights (who have the power to change into other forms) and, by doing so, save the world from destruction.

Before you set off on your quest, you can select from any of the first six levels to tackle, and which one of four armours to wear. Each armour (named after an element) gives you different fire power and bombs — from multi-way fire, running flames, lightning and wave. With the little money you have you can also buy items from a shop; these increase health (you only get one life), firepower, shields, bombs, life restorer and extra continues.

The game plays very much like "Gate" as the action is very frantic, with hardly a second where there is nothing trying to destroy you. Killing the enemies leaves items behind, usually blue or red gems. Collect these for points or credits. You can also pick up other icons to increase firepower and health.

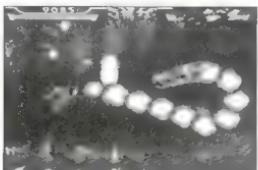
Each level is packed solid with a variety of enemies and traps — from knights that fire single bullets to long wriggly snakes, fire breathing dragons, men riding giant floating turtles, huge insects opening and closing caves, and flames swirling all over the place! There are also mid-way bosses to destroy before encountering the transforming evil knight at the end.

Onn As with GoT, the game features brilliant graphics — excellent multi-way parallax scrolling, masses of detailed animated sprites in different sizes, awesome weapons and all with no slow down or flicker (well, very little flicker)! Try to do this on a Super Famicom!

The sound will blow your ears — and socks — off. Each part of the game features some mind blowing rock music with heavy use of drums and electric guitars (I'm sure Hank Marvin of the Shadows has secretly played on some of these tracks). Don't play this game late at night as it'll wake up the whole street!! Sound effects are explosive too (as in Gate), although with so much going on it's hard to hear anything specific. Unfortunately, there is no speech as there was in the original.

As the game goes, Lords of Thunder is an excellent shoot 'em up, although it doesn't quite live up to Gate of Thunder. There aren't as many big surprises, plus some of the features have already been seen in Gate and are not as stunning second time around. Also, although each level is very varied, there seems to be too much of the same on a single level to make it as exciting as it could have been. But with Normal, Hard and Super difficulty levels, it's not going to be easy to beat them all... well... Normal is fairly easy, but I dare anyone to complete it in Super Mode!

A definite MUST if you are a hard core shoot 'em up fan.



Dan: The sequel to one of the greatest shoot 'em ups ever, Gate of Thunder is finally here. But, while it's a great game, it's slightly disappointing as a

sequel.

It's not any one aspect that stops this from being as brilliant as GoT, but rather a lot of smaller factors. The graphics are great, very similar in style to the first game: large, fast moving sprites (and lots of 'em), simple but effective backdrops and a good overall look. Unfortunately the colours aren't used as well and stippled backdrops are all too common in the game. Nonetheless, the graphics are imaginative and effective.

One of the best elements of GoT was the brilliant sound, with fabulous music, great speech and spot FX. The sound on Lords of Thunder does not disappoint, with similar brilliant music and FX, but somehow it is not quite as good. Gate of Thunder had fairly varied music, but Lords of Thunder does not — every track is guitar based, with hardly a synthesizer in evidence. The tunes are still fabulous though, with some great guitar work. Some very talented session musicians were hired for this game and there are some incredibly intricate guitar solos. The lack of speech is another minus element.

As you can see, Lords of Thunder almost measures up to its predecessor visually and aurally; the same is true of the game-play. It's very fast moving and chaotic, with outrageous weaponry, varied levels and huge bosses. Almost everything you could want from a shoot 'em up, in fact — but again it falls short of the original because this game lacks the element of surprise that was such an important part of GoT. Where are the huge nuclear missiles rising from the bottom of the screen? Where is the ultra fast scrolling section? Where is the huge homing-laser-firing ship entering from the back of the screen? You get the idea.

There are one or two other points I could mention, such as the intro not being as good as in Gate of Thunder, but I think you've got the picture by now. Lords of Thunder is an excellent game in nearly every respect. Although it's too easy (though where Gate was too easy even in Devil mode, this game

seems fairly tricky in Super mode), it's still an extremely worthy purchase.



TERRAFORMING

PC ENGINE SUPER CD BY RIGHT STUFF - JAPAN

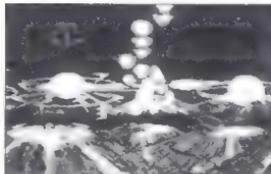


Dan: Terraforming is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up; I've been looking forward to playing this game ever since I saw the rather tasty screen shots. The game's visuals have been designed by top designer Syd Mead (designer of the set for Blade Runner, amongst other films).

So, what are the graphics like? Well, the backdrops are very imaginatively conceived, with some beautiful structures and some interesting use of colour. Unfortunately the programmers haven't been able to do justice to M. Mead's efforts, as the parallax scrolling looks rather "cardboard cut-out" like, which robs the backdrops of their depth. Having said this, the backdrops are still great (and incorporate one or two nice effects), but to really do justice to Syd's visuals a much more powerful machine would be required. The sprites aren't so good, unfortunately. They're fairly imaginatively drawn but look rather low-res and lacking in colour. The bosses are a real disappointment. They're very boring and not a patch on the likes of Salamander or R-Type (I really can't believe these were designed by Mead).

I've rabbited on about the graphics long enough. The other noticeable element of this game is the sound. The soundtrack is excel-

lent. Indeed, along with Lords of Thunder, this has been top of my "Walkman listening



list" lately. But which one is better? Well Terraforming... as a superbly expressive soundtrack and is certainly set on a grander (and broader) scale, with a superb range of tracks: small scale orchestral pieces, guitar based pieces (electric only, no acoustic), synthesizer based tunes --- the variation is incredible, certainly better than LoT's guitar based soundtracks. However, I prefer Lords of Thunder because it has slightly more dynamic, appealing tunes and is better recorded. In comparison Terraforming's recording has a slight lack of bass weight and punch, and a rather muted sound overall. (Tickets for the "Prof Dan The Man Lecture on Good Music" are available through EB for £50 each. Ed.) The sound FX are very average.

Perhaps I'd better mention the actual

gameplay before we run out of room for this review. Actually one of the reasons I mentioned the audio-visual aspects is because there's not too much to be said about the game itself. It's not that there's anything wrong with the game, it's just that it doesn't stand out from other shoot 'em ups a great deal. This doesn't bother me too much; being an extreme shoot 'em up fan I still enjoyed playing this, but I can't see myself going back to this game too often. To be honest, anybody who's not a complete shoot 'em up freak might be a trifle bored by this game. The level design is fairly poor, being just wave after wave of attacking aliens. There are a few different sections, but none of them are any great shakes. Add to this an unexciting selection of weapons and poor bosses and you have a game in which playability takes a back seat to aesthetics.

Overall, there is only one thing I can say about this game: if you're an avid shoot 'em up freak, take a look. Otherwise, forget it.

SCORE

Video	95%
Audio	92%
Playability	80%
Likability	20%

77%

LEMMINGS

GAME BOY BOY OCEAN/PSYGNOSIS - UK



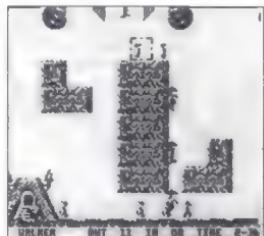
David: Oh no! I thought it was safe to go on a train with my Game Boy, but now they're portable, the air in British Rail carriages will be filled with screams... (must be those BR sandwiches, Ed.)

For the two people that don't know, the idea is to guide a band of stupid creatures to an exit on each level without killing them all. Of course, the route is a mass of sheer drops and lemming-mashing devices. To overcome the obstacles, you can give them special powers, such as the ability to fall long distances (with umbrellas!) or dig into the ground to reach lower levels.

I must admit, I was sceptical about this working, but I was pleasantly surprised. Almost everything is intact, from the intro screen where you can choose four difficulty levels, to whether you have music or sound FX (not that there's much to listen to on the GB front). The layout of the levels is the same; even the tunes you just can't get out

of your head are all there.

The in game graphics are fairly basic, but even with the small screen, the various spe



cial actions are easy to recognise and as cute as ever. To keep things fast, the maximum number of lemmings on screen is now 14 instead of 100, but I found this adds tension, as losing two or more can seriously hinder your plans (and it speeds things up when waiting for them to reach the exit).

To allow more room for the main screen (which can be scrolled to check ahead), you must now keep the B button pressed to access the special powers. I found the easiest way to use this was to pause the game first, then choose your power, move to the lemming you need and then unpause. It actually makes the trickier levels slightly easier (what a cheat, Ed.) and that's no bad thing as they can still be teeth-grindingly hard; as always there's a password screen after each level to save your sanity.

Overall, it's a masterful job of a true classic. The only downside is that there's no two player link-up game --- but who needs friends when you've got this?

SCORE

Video	80%
Audio	76%
Playability	90%
Likability	100%

90%

SUPER STRIKE EAGLE SUPER FAMICOM BY MICROPROSE - USA



Marc Simulation games are a rarity on consoles and, after playing Super Strike Eagle, I can see why!!! I must admit I did have some hopes for this game, especially given the potential of Mode 7 being used to the max, and when the intro came up I began to get comfortable....

Unfortunately the superb intro (an F15 flies in using Mode 7 and we see an explosion in a pilot's visor) is definitely the highlight of the entire game! I soon started to feel it.

The "action" starts with the ability to restore from a saved game and you are then thrown into a mission briefing, which explains what to hit, where and for how many points. It's at this stage that you see that Microprose have obviously started to write a simulation game and then thought "Oh, console games players only like arcade games we'd better change it." The result is an awful mush-mash, not being either a proper simulation or a decent arcade game.

You start the first mission by taking off from an aircraft carrier; the sound effects are the F-1 game-style high-pitched jets which had me wincing straightaway. The sea effect looks amazingly bad — it really is superbly tacky and then you're up, up and away.

Suddenly the view changes to a top-down one, with tiny little planes flying around, and then you're thrown back into the cockpit of the plane. What's



ON THE CARRIER - LOOKS BRILLIANT HERE

going on??!

The far-fetched sim style cockpit view sees some pretty slow and bland graphics

(with the slight exception of the enemy planes) and after you've shot down the rogue MIG (or whatever) the game again suddenly changes view point. This time we get a large top-down view with Mode 7 used to scale the ground in and out. This is actually the bombing run part of the game and it's all a bit of a sham-blis.

For a start, the Mode 7 isn't exceptional (unlike the ageing Pilot Wings) and, in order to bomb anything, you must be nose down to the ground and about a foot away from it, veering back up again to stop yourself from crashing. This really is totally useless and you find yourself constantly going up and down trying to hit things without crashing your plane.

Microprose have an excellent record for simulation games on the PC and Amiga. But here they've sold out to try to make a more arcade-style title, with the result being a truly awful cartridge that they will no doubt want to forget.

Highly UN-recommended!!!



ZOOM UP AND DOWN TO TAKE OUT THE ENEMY SHIP



NEW 3D GOLF: DEVIL COURSE SUPER FAMICOM BY T&E SOFT - JAPAN



Onn: T&E Soft are back again with another new course for their 3D Golf game. Basically this is exactly the same as the previous two simulations but the setting has been changed to an absolutely crazy mountainous region.

If you think you are great at golf games, then you'll be totally bowled over by this. The majority of holes on the courses are on top of mountains — they're so high that even the highest elevated view is not enough to see the holes!

Getting the ball to the green is extremely tough. Not only do you have to hit it on to higher terraces, you have to avoid giant rocks floating in mid-air, lakes and rivers in very awkward places and fairways so steep that if you drop the ball on one of them, it will run back down to where you started!

All in all, New 3D Golf : Devil Course is another very good golf game. But the question is: should you fork out another £40 for the same game with 18 trickier holes? Why couldn't T&E Soft do what Electronic Arts did and include seven different courses on the

cartridge instead?

So it's probably only worth buying if you are a dedicated golf fan... especially if you're mad on the former two games.



THE TERMINATOR SUPER FAMICOM BY MINDSCAPE - UK



In a multi-stage platform game where you rush about, jump around, pick up useful items and shoot the Terminators and other baddies — then you take out the sucker at the end of the stage.

Unfortunately, the game is let down on all counts: terrible 8-bit style graphics, with poor animation. And everything is very dark — so dark that we can't even show you a screen shot (not that it would improve this review). Sound is fairly decent, with OK effects, but the gameplay is very boring and it's badly laid out. The enemies appear all over the place, requiring you to shoot them mostly on platforms above you. One irritating feature is that you can shoot diagonally upwards, but NOT directly upwards — so you tend to ignore most of the baddies and any collectable items. A lot of the time you're also required to leap off platforms into oblivion — and hope for the best.

Basically this game is just your average platform shoot 'em up with nothing at all special. It could easily have been done on an 8-bit NES. Up to the standard of Ocean's Lethal Weapon.

The only thing The Terminator has going for it is, of course, the title. A game worth terminating!

Onn: As Virgin had done the biz with the original Terminator film, I was surprised that Mindscape have jumped in to produce the SF version. In a



ANOTHER SCREWDRIVER, MATE?

L is known for knowledge of his hardware — not to mention other people's. So this month he reveals all... and more...

DSP, CD-ROM, SCART, PAL, NTSC, MHz, CO-P...

One hardly knows where to start. Unfortunately here in the UK (and to a lesser extent in the US), speculation and theories on many aspects of console hardware have led to misunderstandings and misconceptions on the subject. It is much too often the case that manufacturers like Nintendo and SEGA will submit pre-production specifications/data to the big national magazines, without any consideration as to how they will be presented to the public. One of the best examples of this is by now infamous CO-Processors (CO-P) and Digital Signal Processors (DSP), which are being developed and used in an increasing number of games for consoles.

FACT: Few people in the industry actually know how DSPs work, let alone some idiot who spends all day behind a word processor with a few notes on a game that has only just been completed. Probably the best way to go about understanding these "miracle chips" is to forget completely what you have read about them in magazines so far (excepting EB34 of course!).

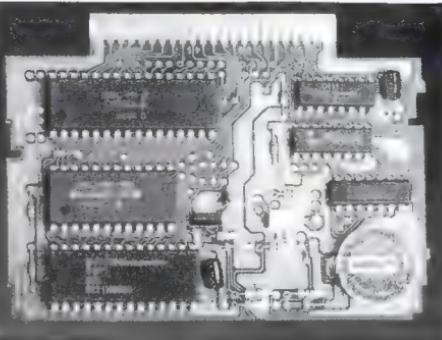
Digital Signal Processors vary as much in specification and performance as any other semiconductor device; as such, it would be a great mistake to assume that their inclusion and use within a console game would automatically boost the capabilities of the base system to any significant extent. Everyone knows you get what you pay for and, believe me, there have been some dreadful fiascos in both the research and implementation of such peripheral chips in the past. At worst, it is a complete waste of time and money. However, it would not be an over-statement if I said DSP technology is going to do more for the coming decades than CPU and uProcessor design did for the past fifteen or so years to the world of today. And this is to the whole of

the electronics industry, not just consoles and computers, especially audio/video applications and high-speed communications, where most of the research is currently being done. At the moment they are being used in anything from Medical, Military and High performance Audio systems, as well as computer applications and mobile comms.

They will NEVER increase your machine's actual speed though. This concept (perpetuated by a lot of British mags) is like saying that installing a better stereo system in a car would increase engine performance! The SF will always be running code at a reliable and sensible 3.58MHz at the very most. However this does not mean it has actually a clock of 3.58MHz and this is where things start to get complicated. I'll probably write more about this in a future issue but, for the time being, think of the master clock frequency as being 3.58Hz.

The Super Nintendo uses a 65C816 CPU — as also used by the Apple Mac — which is a pretty powerful device. So why the apparently slow clock? Well, a micro-processor (or uP) is not much use unless it has external devices (memory, video, etc.) to support it. More importantly it has to have some sort of ROM where the game code is actually stored. There is a limit as to how quickly and how often these can be accessed (esp. the ROM), and there would be little point in having a blisteringly fast clock when the Mask ROM used in a game requires a slower pace. High speed designs require much more money and the benefits in comparison would be not be worth the extra hassle and dash. OK there IS slow-down — especially when the High-Res modes are used, but this is where DSP can help.

Now, PERCEIVED game speed (frame-rate, etc.) can be increased a lot, when the complex maths calculations can be performed externally by a chip such as, for example, Nintendo's "DSP1" (Pilotwings, Mano Kart); this is in fact an NEC 77C25 and it was designed way back 'in '84. An external fast clock is then used, which means the chip can run at a different (usually higher) speed than that



of the rest of the machine. This is simply achieved by the inclusion of a separate crystal and a few gates forming a clock generator, local to the external DSP and, of course, on the same board inside the game cartridge. The console's CPU is then left running happily at 3.58MHz, with much less to do than would otherwise be required to achieve the same result (thus apparently slowing down).

SETA are now using a peripheral chip, which (unlike Star Fox) uses an external fast clock. This is the ST-010, as used in their latest game *Exhaust Heat 2*, and goes a step further by incorporating SRAM for Battery Backed data and Working SRAM for processor operations in a single device package.

More details on these later, but all this begs the question: why not include a DSP in the mother-board of the main unit and finish with it? Well, apart from the obvious cop-out answer of manufacturing costs, one has to remember that different games have different requirements and where a DSP1 would be adequate for something like Pilotwings, games like Star Fox make use of polygon graphics and so benefit from a dedicated 3-D handler. So where do you draw the line? As it happens, a DSP IS used within the SF — not for the main program code, but for the sound/music processor (SMP) which is entirely separate from the main CPU functions, with its own RAM and instruction set. Developed by Sony, the sound chip set is what

really gives the SF the edge over Sega's 16-bit machine. In some of my experiments with SF boards, I sometimes end up making the CPU crash (so no game or picture), while the music carries on playing quite happily uninterrupted. Some of you might have experienced this in other contexts — particularly with early Super Famicoms converted to PAL which overheated a lot.

Anyway, the bottom line is this. Peripheral chips (such as those used in Star Fox, Ex Heat 2 and Kart) can and will improve gameplay and graphical performance IF USED PROPERLY. The industry is only just tapping into the immense power that can be sought from these devices and, with CD-ROM just around the corner, this destabilizes current market status and public opinion. My opinion is: so far, so good, but there's a hell of a lot more which can be achieved with the concept.

But would you be prepared to pay for the extra? Also, it is just as easy to make bad use of DSP technology (in fact easier) as it is to produce dreadful main code for the 65C816 ("Wheel of Fortune" anyone?). The inclusion of such ICs into a game cart does not automatically mean the game will play any better than one without. KONAMIs' Goeman Warner 3 (incidently... thanks Onn!) hasn't even got a battery back-up RAM chip and is, in my opinion, still one of the best games to grace the Super Nintendo — slow-down and all! One thing's for sure, we will be seeing a lot more of these chips,

not just in video games, but throughout the electronics industry with some really impressive results... and some equally spectacular disasters. Less of the latter, I hope.

"So what the hell is this RISC and DRAM, SRAM DSP?" I am often asked. Well, RAM is obviously memory in which digital data can be stored for manipulation/reference from a computer. If you didn't know that, you don't deserve the paper that you're holding. However, after taking a look at some PC magazines (IBM that is), or indeed some specifications that we mention in this copy, you'll soon find reference being made to DRAM and SRAM. Now, this is not an Open University programme and obviously you're not looking to get a degree in memory devices, but briefly here's the zip.

"SRAM" stands for Static Random Access Memory and is the more expensive of the two types. It has the advantage that data can be stored when main power is switched off, with only the use of an external back-up battery; it is obviously used in all game carts with this feature. It is difficult to get large capacities in small devices, but their implementation and interfacing with the rest of a computer system are very simple, with no other requirements than just a 5 Volt power supply.

"DRAM", on the other hand, is Dynamic RAM. This is used where large amounts of RAM are required at the minimum cost and using the smallest power consumption. This type is used extensively in computers like IBM PCs, but it is also an obvious choice for things like CD RAM and code workspace. However, there is a snag. DRAM chips need special attention from

the host system and usually the CPU or another purpose-built device is used to maintain operation (refreshing). So if power is removed from the whole system, all data is lost — unlike with the Static type. With DRAM, it is no use maintaining power by a battery, as data will be corrupt as soon as the CPU is switched off and neglects to support it. The way in which it does that is incredibly boring and you already know too much — so don't ask!

As for "RISC", it stands for Reduced Instruction Set Computer and is the concept whereby the number of processor commands available is much reduced (40 is a typical figure, compared to over 200 with some conventional types). An absolute nightmare for programmers and a definite possibility for crap games on the horizon, unless decent development systems are used to write the game code. The idea of RISC is that, with less commands to be interpreted, the processor has to spend less time trying to suss out what you want it to do — it can actually get to the doing bit in much less time (which is all that is required in the first place). This means it takes less time for each instruction to be executed and, together with

an instruction cache, data is processed very quickly indeed.

This is

a typical example of why clock speed and "MHz" should not be taken as a direct comparison of processing power; a RISC device with a decent size cache running

at 8MHz might easily leave a conventional equivalent running at say 33MHz choking in the dust.

The RISC label appeared in early '87 with the 32-bit Acorn machines. But the question is surely: how many instructions is a system meant to have (or NOT have in this case) before it can be tagged "RISC"? Forty, sixty, two? After all, compared to some early designs of CPU with clock frequencies of less than 200KHz and about 250 bytes of memory, 44 instructions is an absolute luxury. OK, this is going back a bit — the example is rather extreme, but you get the point. Reduced Instruction Set systems have had a lot of development since '87 and I think it is a legit way of getting performance, but nothing worth wetting your pants for — Mr Bignall & Co.

SETAS' ST-010 is the chip used in Ex. Heat 2 and is said to have RISC architecture, but I cannot confirm that. What I did do is to take our copy apart (as well as Pilotwings, 'Kart and Star Fox) and found out the following...

The cheap and nasty DSP1 is a 77C25 NEC chip as used in Pilotwings and later on Mario Kart. An external clock is used running at 7.566MHz, but it will also cope with higher frequency should the need arise. Note these are actual measured values and not some figures plucked out of another mag.

The Argonaut-developed "Super FX" chip is in fact called the "MARIO CHIP1" (more on this next issue) and is a Polygon Graphics handler, which uses the SF video clock to derive its own 10.4MHz by dividing by two. This might sound incorrect — but take my word for it and I'll explain in a later issue. The extra connectors either side only make use of one pin, which is the clock o/p pin of the SF, so ignore mags that say they are used to improve performance. The game PCB uses surface-mounted devices exclusively and looks absolutely gorgeous in the process. However, I doubt that you would go and pay 55 quid for a game just because of the way the board looks inside (unless of course you are like me in which case that would be the only reason why you would buy any game at all!).

Anyway the MARIO1 is semi-16bit with an 8-bit data bus and uses an external 32Kbyte SRAM chip for workspace — not battery back-up. Overall, an OK setup if you

particularly like chunky polygon graphics. I remain sceptical but, I have to admit, I own a copy of Star Fox and enjoy... errrrm... looking at it!

Which brings us on to the SETA offering, Exhaust Heat 2. An ST-010 is the one responsible and, as in Pilotwings, an external clock is used running at 22MHz. Fast, you might think — you'd be right! The 64-pin device also incorporates Battery Backed SRAM for game-save positions, as well as working SRAM and, of course, the actual Co-P. The PCB uses the more conventional through-pin technology and is also equipped with the extra connector bits either side, as with Star Fox. However, in this case it doesn't even make use of one solitary connection! So it will work quite happily with any country adapter, as long as it is a fairly decent one and can handle Mario Kart, etc.

In my opinion, SETA have a winner as regards hardware, but I am less convinced about their programmers. Also, Nintendo have put a lot of money into developing their new chip with Argonaut, but I think for a real leap in gaming experience we'll have to wait until the CD system arrives next year. And I'm pretty sure Nintendo see it the same way.

Bear in mind that these sort of details are only part of the story.

Anyway, much less about fiz and instead evaluate each game as a whole. However it does show that the Super Famicom is very expandable and a lot of time is being spent on improving its performance.

This issue has had more than its fair share of the technical side, but this is intended to establish a basic understanding of the field; I doubt that we'll be dedicating this much space in future issues. Of course we will continue to cover such areas as and when the need arises, with new developments, as well as a regular Hardware column, with projects and discussion on the internals of your machine.

In the meantime, send any technical queries, thoughts, arguments or even a blank cheque made payable to "Orn Lee". In return, we will print your name, address and amount drawn so that everyone knows what a pillock you have been. Until next month, Adios.



BUBSY

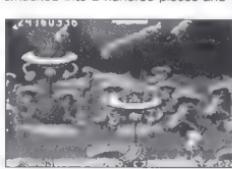
SUPER FAMICOM BY ACCOLADE - USA



Onn: After all the hype about Bubsy by other magazines (mainly the Americans), what is it actually like? Well, to put it plainly, Bubsy is very much like Sonic the Hedgehog. BUT, I have to say, it's not quite as much fun.

Like Sonic, you play a great cartoon character who must tear his way through each level, each of which comprises several stages. You collect items on the way, avoiding or stamping out cute (but nasty) baddies, reach the end of a level and destroy the obligatory boss.

What makes Bubsy so impressive is the graphics especially the sprite animations. The animation of Bubsy himself is excellent. He starts off on all fours, like he's running the 100m sprint. He can run fast like Sonic, jump, flip over, spread out while gliding, and balance on one foot on the edge of platforms. Bubsy also has a ton of different stunned and death sequences — from being frozen in ice, squashed as a pancake, smashed into a hundred pieces and whizzing around



THE TWO UFO BOSSSES - JUMP ON THEM

the screen when "popped" by a spike. In another scene he wears goggles while riding the roller coasters; he also has a great assortment of different expressions on his face in different situations. The other sprites and backdrops are very good too...

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

89%

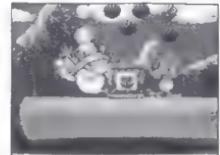
especially a massive train which Bubsy uses to get along.

Sound wise, there's some great and humorous speech at the beginning of each stage (that's probably why this game is 16meg), like "I thought I saw Elvis back there". However, the in game tunes are rather too repetitive and can drive you round the bend. It does feature a nice touch, namely that the music changes at different locations — like when you enter a cave — but these tunes can also be annoying. Sound FX are fairly minimal, although there are the occasional good ones like the out-of-tune walking (drunken?) piano.

As the game goes, Bubsy plays very well. It has everything a platform adventure game requires, but it falls short of Sonic because you can get killed too easily — one touch by a baddie or a spike and you're dead. That's why running at full speed (which is one of the features that makes Sonic so enjoyable) is not advisable in this game. Some of the stages are very boning, like the fair ground one — very standard platform action with the occasional roller coaster ride. But others are extremely good, especially on level three when you're on a moving train. The bosses are disappointing; for example on stage one you encounter just two UFOs with balls of yarn — all you have to do is bounce on both UFOs twice. A matter of seconds!

Bubsy isn't as playable as either Super Mario or Sonic, but it is certainly a very good platform adventure, complimenting the likes of Tiny Toons, which has a number of similar features.

Not a brilliant game but worth getting.



YOU'VE JUST BOUNCHED ON A BADDIE

SUPER CONFLICT: THE MID EAST

SUPER FAMICOM BY VIC TOKAI USA



Onn: As a great fan of "simple to play" strategy war games, like Hudson's Nectaris for the PC Engine and Earth Light for the Super Famicom, I was delighted at the chance to get my hands on an American war game, so that I could gain more information on troops, tanks, etc — something that's not possible on the other two Japanese games.

Unfortunately, Super Conflict is a sadly failed attempt to copy Nectaris; it certainly won't appeal to many strategy buffs. Firstly, the graphics are extremely poor — very basic and with unimpressive battle animation sequences. The scrolling of the map is awful too.

But the gameplay is just ridiculous. In most cases, whoever attacks usually wins. This might sound logical, but in my view is not the way war games are meant to be. If a tank attacks a similar tank on the same location with the same amount of armour, then the result should be the same for both tanks: both should sustain the same amount of damage or both should blow up! But in Super Conflict, the attacking tank always seems to blow up its adversary, while sustaining no damage itself. So most of the "strategy" involves staying back until you can make the attack on the opponent first — forget the usual tactics of selecting which tanks or troops you want to attack and how and where you want to attack them.

On the plus side, the one player game does have a whole lot of levels to tackle. There's also a two player option. But as the game is so bad, there's not much point.

Verdict: stay well clear of this one. If you are a dedicated war gamer check out the more playable Earth Light by Hudson — even though it's in Japanese you shouldn't have much problem sussing out how to play it... after all, there are only really three commands in these games: Move, Attack and End Turn.

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

25%

DOUBLE CLUTCH

MEGA DRIVE BY SEGA



Onn: Double Clutch is a one or two player, top-down scrolling race game that resembles Codemaster's Micro Machines or NCS' MotoRacer. But this one is so dire that it looks like nothing more than a bonus game that you'd find on a top cartridge by using a cheat!

The graphics are blocky and very basic. Control of the car is awful — it skids all over the place, making it impossible to keep up with the computer cars. The tracks are dead narrow too, so overtaking is virtually impossible.

BRIEFLY...

ble.
Because I don't want to use excessively foul language, I won't even mention the collectable items on the road.

Awful is the only word for this game. Get Micro Machines instead (although we haven't seen Micro Machines yet... have we Codemasters? Hint, hint!!).

No point in humiliating the makers further with individual points. Let's just say...

SCORE
5%

DRAGON BALL Z (PART 2) SUPER FAMICOM BY BANDAI - JAPAN

Onn: Another game that looks to be a Street Fighter II clone and in a way it is. However, just to make it awkward for everyone, Bandai have kept some elements of its predecessor, the original strategy game.

Like SFII, you can choose from eight fighters to fight it out against the computer or another mortal being. Here the characters include Son Goku (the main character), a fellow that looks like Tetsuo from Akira, a small innocent girl, an old Russian-dressed guy, a muscle-bound bloke and a couple of aliens and strange looking creatures. Then it's down to the single plane SFII-style arena. All looks well here, as each of the fighters can jump, duck, punch and kick. But as soon as they move away from each other, the screen splits in two!! Also, they can jump straight up in the air and stay there. Or they can shift around in the air, swapping between the split screens... very confusing!!

As well as the normal moves, the game features a host of special moves for each fighter and, I have to admit, they are very difficult to perform. Each fighter also has a

super duper special move which he/she can only perform if they have enough power. Did I mention power? Well, like Art of Fighting on the Neo Geo, as well as the health bar, you also have a power bar. This decreases

when you use special moves and get hit, but then slowly recharges.

Each of the character's super special moves has them firing a mega-beam of some sort. If hit, there is always a massive explosion, accompanied by a massive loss of energy. To get the main character to perform this move, you have to press DOWN, LEFT-DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT and then press the "special" button at the night time. The move is so devastating that a conventional block cannot stop it. However, you can anticipate it and bring up a shield — which, of course, is near impossible!

Apart from the long range attacks, close combat is not a patch on SFII. Performing combinations is near impossible and standard moves are limited.

Graphics are pretty good,



SON GOKU FIGHTS THE GREEN ALIEN CREATURE - IN SFII STYLE

BIO METAL SUPER FAMICOM BY ATHENA - JAPAN (SUPPLIED BY MEGAWARE)

Marc: Unlike the MD, the SF isn't exactly blessed with an abundance of decent shoot 'em ups and so any new ones are always a bit of a surprise.

The intro to Bio Metal tells a little story (the usual wafer thin tale that accompanies these games!) with some nice black and white pictures (very arty) and a decent hard rock style tune. The start of the game itself is very reminiscent of about a hundred other shoot 'em ups you see your spaceship rocketed along a tunnel and are then propelled into the first level. Well, it is a shoot 'em up — did you really expect originality??!

On first play, Bio Metal seems to be a Thunderforce 3

wannabe. The scrolling is very fast and loads of enemy sprites are thrown at you from all directions. Scrolling of this speed is pretty impressive on the SF but, alas, there is some appalling slowdown when the screen gets busy and the machine does get very badly stressed! Groan... creak... clear the screen and it all speeds up again. A bit poor really — especially when compared to the recent batch of Japanese shoot 'em ups (this is American by the way).

The graphics are quite nice throughout — particularly the sand and parallax on level two. Mode 7 is used on some of the bosses to produce some bizarre stretch and squash effects. However, the sprites are on the whole very unimaginative, although they are reasonably

well drawn.

The other problem with the graphics (apart from the slowdown) is glitching. Yes, this old chestnut raises its ugly head again — it hasn't been seen that much on the recent releases. In this game whole chunks of the screen flicker horribly when there are a few things on the same line. This is a shame and really spoils parts of the game.

Music is very nice and follows through from the hard rock-esque title tune style with a different piece of pounding stuff for each level. Naturally this suits this type of game very well.

This is definitely not an easy game (at times it seems ridiculously hard) but, like Thunderforce 3 on the MD, you do eventually make progress after many attempts.

Bio Metal hovers somewhere above average but below the really top quality shoot 'em ups on the SF. Occasional shoot 'em up players will probably not be overly impressed with this game. However, those craving a new challenge may well find it here, and this is a lot better than the vast majority of shoot 'em ups that have been released over the past months (anyone for Blazeon or Acrobat Mission?!)



DRAGON SLAYER

PC ENGINE CD-ROM BY HUDSON SOFT, USA



Derek. Until I had played Ys Books 1 and 2 for the PC Engine CD ROM, I wasn't a great fan of role play games. But this soon changed. Ys had great graphics, fabulous music and interesting puzzles; it set the standard by which other CD based RPGs are judged.

Dragon Slayer, an RPG written by Falcom (the same company that produced Ys) starts out well enough with a good animated sequence setting out the game's story line. The peaceful kingdom of Farlayne is attacked by mon-

sters and, in the ensuing fight, the king is killed. Prince Logan, the game's hero, is too young to be crowned King, so a baron named Drax becomes King until Prince Logan's sixteenth birthday. Drax however decides to kill the young prince before he becomes sixteen. Logan survives the attack and so begins his quest to destroy Drax and claim the crown. Along the way he is helped by three other characters, each one with his or her own strengths.

Much of the game takes place on a scrolling map and you guide your character from one town or city to the other. On the way, Prince Logan encounters monsters which he must defeat. Unlike Ys (where you can hack and slash your way through them), here you are presented with pictures of the monsters and a list of the attacking moves and spells you can use. Choosing the correct move or spell takes prac-

tice. There is an auto-attack mode where the Engine chooses the moves for you. To be honest, although this type of view is more detailed than the normal arcade style of fighting, it does mean that the flow of the game is repeatedly interrupted.

If you can get used to the rather start/stop way in which it is presented, you will find a detailed and challenging game beneath. Atmospheric music and the use of lots of digitised speech help this game no end. One for real RPG fans.

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

83%

THE HUMANS

GAME BOY BY GAMETEK/IMAGITEC



David. Recently released on the Amiga, this is a strange mix of Lemmings and an evolution game.

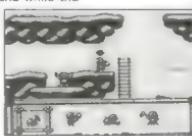
The idea is simple. You have a tribe of twelve cavemen that you must help to evolve. To do this, you guide them to complete certain goals, for example finding a spear. Each task leads to more discoveries, such as fire and the wheel, and each new item can be used to make life easier on the next stage.

Of course, it's not as simple as that. Each level is a maze of ladders and ledges that can only be reached by forming human ladders — which you build by moving one caveman onto another's shoulders. Later on, the hazards include hungry dinosaurs and a nival clan.

Although the basic idea is similar to Lemmings, the discoveries all add a strategy element. For example, the spear can be thrown variable distances or used as a make shift pole vault to cross wide gaps (but remember to throw it back so the next one can get across); the wheel can be used to travel quickly, which is useful as some levels have strict time limits. The various powers are easily accessed from a menu screen at the bottom and the layout is

uncluttered.

The graphics vary considerably. The in-game screens are rather flat looking and while the Humans are larger than the Lemmings, they don't seem as well animated. However, some of the between-level pictures are very nice and quite funny, as is the excellent manual — easily the best for a Game Boy cartridge (just read the glossary in the back).



EB HUMANS

The music is pleasant — for a while. But it changes and you'll soon be reaching for the volume control.

Some of the levels are really devious, but you never give up because it's a fair kind of difficulty and, besides, each level has a password so you never have to start from the beginning.

Many people will just ignore this as a Lemmings rip off, but it has enough new features (such as a witch doctor who you can call up to exchange "spare" Humans for tools) and a nicely defined difficulty curve to merit a closer look. Go on, help some Humans — you might be related!

THE HUMANS

MEGA DRIVE BY GAMETEK



Onn. Just as I was putting the finishing touches to this EB, I got this here Mega Drive version of The Humans. So why wait for a full review in next issue, when I can stick one in now?

Basically, the MD version of the game is identical to the Amiga version, but it is a lot more playable — there's no ridiculous 10 hour loading between levels and animated sequences.

The graphics are slightly larger than the Amiga game, but this is possibly due to the bigger full screen view (unless you are playing the game on a PAL machine through the TV). There are now some nice full-screen animated in-between scenes, which add that little something extra to the game, although they are silent. On the subject of sound, one bad point is that you can't actually hear both music (which is pretty good) and sound effects — it's one or the other... Amiga conversion or what?

The gameplay is just like its Amiga (and Game

Boy) counterpart, with the same levels, starting from "discovering" the spear to more difficult levels involving pixel perfect actions, problems to solve and so on. The overall game design is very good but, I have to admit, I found it too frustrating to play for long. The Humans are so slow and it can take ages to complete a level — even if you know exactly what to do. And some of the pixel perfect moves required are a real pain in the brontosaurus.

All in all, The Humans is a good enough game but, like the original, it's let down by the extremely slow pace. Worth getting if you have a lot of

patience... I don't!

SCORE

Video
Audio
Playability
Lastability

75%



BRAIN MAIL

This is the definitive EB Letters Page — so definitive that it got squeezed out of the last edition due to lack of space!

Remember we pay £5 for each letter printed. So send your more inspired scribblings to:

BRAIN MAIL
ELECTRIC BRAIN
SPACE CITY
77 BLYTHE ROAD
LONDON W14 0HP

HUBBY HUBBY

Dear EB,

Just read EB 33 (well, bits of it) and wot a breath of fresh air it is when compared with the tarty glossies posing in every newspaper.

Also, you don't take gaming as seriously as some mags I could mention, which has got to be good. I mean it's only a bit of fun innit? The craze will fade eventually and the kids will most likely be back playing with their marbles (like we did when I was a lad).

One suggestion: why don't you have a Readers' Husbands section listing worst all-time scores on games and the length of time it took to achieve such miserable levels of ineptitude?

Dave "how do I play this game?" Fisher
Nottingham

PS. Can I have the 5 quid now?

Dear Dave

We're glad you like the mag, Dave, but this "Reader's Husbands" section sounds like a bit of a lily-livered "safety in numbers" type thing. Just how much lemonade do you put in your beer? Seriously though, it's not how long it takes you to complete a game that matters, it's how quickly you finish it. Or something like that.

PS. 5 quid? How about 5 quids?

SNES BETTER?

Dear EB,

Why do Mega Drive owners insist that its games have better playability than those on the SNES? What could possibly beat all 96 levels of Super Mario Kart? One of my friends even said that magazines give the SNES higher ratings than Mega Drive games! Do you think so? I personally think it's an excuse for the Mega Drive's lack of Mode 7 and that speed chip thing used in Star Fox.

Ben Jordan, W/Sussex

Dear Ben

Yes... er, no. Sorry, what was the question again? I'm not too sure quite what you're getting at, but I would say that playability levels are fairly even in the majority of Super Famicom and Mega Drive games. But the SF has the edge with games such as Street Fighter II and Contra III, which are unparalleled on the Mega Drive.

FAN MAIL

Dear EB,

I've just bought EB 33. Only a quid? Wot a bang! If every issue is like this one then I'm getting it every month. You mentioned "fans" contributing too, so how about letting some of us do some reviews or perhaps some second opinions? I'm always getting import games way before the "professional" publications get a look in! I've no idea if you have reviewed Super Star Wars on the SF yet, but I'm sending you a sample review of it anyway. Perhaps you could include it with your own (wiggle, wiggle, grovel, grovel)! By the way, I own a SNES, Mega Drive, Game Boy and a Game Gear, so if you want any articles/features/reviews/anything — then I'm offering my services! Erm... that's it really. Gotta go. Darth Vader's trying to turn me on to the "dark side". Yikes!

Paul Concord, Kent

PS. Think ya good at Street Fighter II? You haven't played me yet!

Dear Paul

We welcome contributions from readers but we currently have a limited number of pages to play with, so we must consider carefully what we print. Of most interest to us are reviews for "minority" machines, such as the Game Gear. To be honest, printing readers reviews depends a lot upon other readers' reactions to this idea. We reviewed Super Star Wars a couple of issues ago, so we can't really use your piece. It's pretty good for a first time attempt, but if I might make one teeny criticism it's that you devoted too many sentences to describing the game and not enough to conveying your opinion of it.

PS. Any time, Pal!

EB COMPETITION? NAH!

Dear EB,

I have enclosed a few multi-format cheats that I hope you find useful. Your mag is OK but lacks a few qualities that Gamesmaster has — but you earn second place on my computer mags list.

James S. Bowes

PS. How do you release it so cheaply?

Dear James

You mention that EB lacks a few qualities that Gamesmaster has, but neglect to mention what they are. It's really important to us that readers tell us what's wrong with the mag and what they would like to see included. In this way we can write the sort of fanzine people want to read — this is what we'd really like to do.

By the way, the cheats you enclosed with your letter are a little dated, don't you think? One of them is over three years old! (Maybe having extremely old cheats in EB is one quality that's lacking? Ed.)

PS. We steal the paper.

EB COMPETITION 2 NAHHH!

Dear EB,

I am a new reader to your magazine and I must say that it is nothing short of BRILLIANT. Your mag is half the price of all the multi-coloured ones and you have about twice as many reviews.

My only criticism is that you slag off the competition. Please don't do this as I find it is very childish and very immature.

Please could you answer these questions for me?

1) Would it be possible to get any back issues of your magazine?

2) What is Anime? And where can I get information on this stuff?

3) Who does the great cartoons in your mag? Would it be possible to get any copies of this person's work?

Stephen Slope Co. Durham

Dear Stephen

First of all, thanks for the praise. Now then, I must take objection to this "slagging off other mags" business. Where in issue 33 can you see this? We may make one or two criticisms of other magazines, but only when called for. You have to remember that we buy and read magazines just like you do, and, if we see something that annoys us, it's difficult to keep quiet about it. We hardly ever mention other mags, but even when we do we can hardly be accused of "slagging them off". The problem, I feel, is that the market has been flooded with inferior magazines, staffed by writers who know lots about rumours spreading — but very little about games. They try to make up for their deficiencies with a worthless (and costly) cover gift. There are lots of elements we dislike about the many available console magazines, but it's not something I wish to go into here (after all, we don't want to be accused of "slagging off" the competition, do we?). Hopefully you can see the subtle differences we try to include in EB. And if you can't, then perhaps we'll explain our approach some time.

The As to your Qs:

1) Unfortunately we only have a few back issues — some issues, none at all. Your best bet would be to place a classified advert in EB and if we — or another reader — has the issue you want, you'll get it (for a small fee).

2) Anime is a Japanese term for a style of animation, which has recently become popular in the UK, due to the release of translated Japanese films on video. Check out larger video stores on the Manga Label for titles like Akira, Fist of the North Star and the recently released 3x3 Eyes and Vampire Hunter D. The latter two will feature in our next issue, together with other Anime related information.

3) See "The Brains..." on Page 3. If you want to find other examples of JF's work, you might be wise to look in a well-known adult comic that begins with the letter "V".

KEEP THOSE LETTERS COMING!

STRIDER 2

MEGA DRIVE BY US GOLD - UK

Onn. I'm not a great fan of the original Strider game — I found the gameplay a bit lacking as, most of the time, you seemed to be able to run forward, tapping the fire button, killing every thing in your path with ease (although later levels were a bit better). Graphically it was excellent, although the conversion to the Mega Drive was let down by occasional pauses in the game — to decompress data?!

Strider 2 is basically more of the same. As the Russian super hero, you still have to get through each of the highly defensive levels of nasty mechanical beasts, deadly laser beams and so on; reach the end of each stage and destroy the boss. Like the original, Strider can climb up walls, hang on to ceilings, somersault and use his nifty blade-like weapon.

Unfortunately, whereas the layout of the game is pretty good, the programming, graphics and sound are pretty average straying to poor. First, the graphics are very ST/Amiga-like — lacking and making poor use of colours with stippling. The animation is not up to the original's, with very few frames, the scrolling is not exactly smooth and, to top it all, the whole game is very slow when compared to its predecessor.

The background music is also very Amiga-like. It all sounds very similar — are they using Soundtracker I wonder? Sound effects are OK and the speech at the end of each level is pretty good.

Despite so many flaws in the game, Strider 2 is probably just playable. One irritating part is that on one level (level 2, I think) there are a lot of electric beams to get through. If you accidentally time it wrong and

get zapped, the beam pushes you straight into another electric beam and you get zapped again — this beam pushes you into another beam, etc. You get the idea! I must also mention there is some very suspicious collision detection, not to mention the ropes that Strider doesn't want to climb at times!!

Judged on its own merits, Strider 2 isn't a bad game, but it's not a great one either. Worth a look, but a poor sequel.



USA ICE HOCKEY

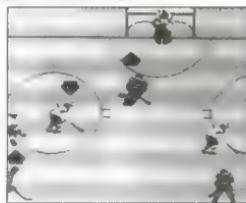
SUPER FAMICOM BY JALECO - JAPAN

Onn. Like EA's game, USA Ice Hockey is played on a vertically scrolling plan-view screen. The graphics are a lot bigger than EA's, however, giving a much better look to the game. Animation of the players as they skate around, and the way the puck wobbles and flips over are all very good. Unfortunately, the scrolling isn't very smooth, and the game slows down a fair old bit when

all the players are piling on the puck. USA plays fairly well — very much like EA's game, in fact, although it's let down by a few minor flaws. Apart from the slow down, I found it difficult to select the character I wished to control; just do this you have to press the top buttons to cycle to the player you want. Having the nearest person to the puck active would have been a lot simpler. As far as I can tell, there aren't as many different possible

shots at goal as on EA Hockey, although the shooting is more controllable.

All in all, this is not a bad ice hockey game. But with Electronic Arts' far better title in competition, I can't see any point in getting this at all. Average.



HE'S GOING FOR GOAL... OR IS HE SKATING THE WRONG WAY?

SUPER 2020 BASEBALL

SUPER FAMICOM BY K AMUSEMENT - JAPAN

Onn. The best baseball games on any video system have to be the three on the Neo Geo... and this is one of them. So can 2020 Baseball be reproduced successfully on the SF?

Well, for a start the game has all the possible options required and the graphics are extremely good — very much like the original Neo game, although the

animation has been scaled down and some features are missing.

The sound unfortunately has suffered badly from the conversion. Sound effects are minimal and there's none of the incredible Neo speech to give it that extra special touch.

However, it's the game itself that matters most. 2020 plays fairly well, especially against another human opponent, as you might expect. 2020 differs in some respects from real baseball (like having only one area to hit a home run), and



"SHE PITCHES AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A SINGLE."

this version does lack the excitement which the original Neo game had. So, like most baseball games, it's fun to play for a few games — but that's about it.

Probably the best baseball game for the SF so far, but keep an eye out for Namco's new one!!!



ASPARAGUS TIPS

BATMAN RETURNS (SF)

Well, would you believe it? The standard Konami cheat works on this game too! On the OPTION screen, with the second pad press the usual UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A and, when you start the game, you'll have 9 lives!

BLACK HOLE ASSAULT (MD-CD)

As you know, entering MUTEKI as your name gives you invulnerability. But try entering BIGNET for Operation BHA option! And try two player mode.

BOMBERMAN '93 (PC-E)

Here are all the codes to this excellent multi-play game, thanks to S.Slater.

GDKCABMA	(A8 BOSS)
EBCBCHBA	(B1 START)
BHDDFBAB	(B2 BOSS)
IDEDDBMA	(C1 START)
EIEDDGBF	(C8 BOSS)
EAEDHGBD	(D1 START)
UFDFHGKB	(D8 BOSS)
KDFDPGMB	(E1 START)
HIGEPCGC	(E8 BOSS)
HBGEPGEC	(F1 START)
MKJFFPGOC	(F8 BOSS)
GAIFPSAD	(G1 START)
KULFPSJD	(G8 BOSS6)

After this the game is over, so you can watch the credits.

EXHAUST HEAT II (SF)

This game is rather cool, but embedded in it are a ton of options... well six in fact.

When you switch on, you'll get the NOTICE screen: as soon as you see this, do the following:

1) Press UP, X, RIGHT, Y, DOWN, B, LEFT, A, A and START for the Time Attack Configuration mode!

2) Press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, X, B, Y, A, A, A, A, A, A, then press START and you'll get the Car Select mode.

3) Press button A four times, button B fourteen times, then START for the F-1 track select.

4) Press L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R and START for Sound Test mode.

5) Press button Y four times,

button X twice and START for a two player tank game!!

6) Press button X four times, button Y twice and START for a multi-play breakout style game.

JAKI CRUSH (SF)

We were going to print a load of codes for this game that would enable you to get different numbers of balls — but this seemed rather pointless. So we'll give you just one that's easy to remember: 55555555, which will give you 21 balls. But, better still (as it's a rather tricky game to complete), here's an easy way to do this rather cool (or should that be nasty??) pinball game. Enter CRUSHEND as the password and you will have quite a large score, enabling you to complete the game with ease!! Unfortunately the ending is not a patch on Devil Crash.

ROAD RASH 2 (MD)

On the title screen, hold down UP, button A and C and press START to go to the race select screen. And if you release the buttons, you'll start with the groovy Wild Thing 2000 bike.

SONIC 2 (MD)

This is a tricky one as it only works sometimes. You all know how to get Super Sonic... but what about Super Tails?? If you combine the Super Sonic cheat and the object cheat (which we printed ages ago), that's how to do it. First get the STAGE SELECT screen by playing tunes 19, 65, 09, 17 on OPTIONS... RESET, hold A, while pressing START. On STAGE screen, play the following tunes in order... 04, 01, 02, 06, 01, 09, 09, 02, 01, 01, 02, 04... you'll hear a ring! Select the first stage and press START. Kill Sonic and hold down A when you reappear. Now press B and, hopefully, you will be able to change Sonic. Press A to change to a single ring, press C to put tons of rings on screen. Press B to get Sonic back. Collect 50+ rings, jump in the air and he SHOULD turn into Super Sonic. Now change S Sonic into a grey TV

screen. Press C to place one on the screen. Turn him back to Sonic and jump on TV. A Sonic-to-Tails icon will appear and the screen will flash — thus giving Sonic's power to Tails, who will always stay Super Tails!!

STREETS OF RAGE (GG)

As we don't have this game, we can't tell you if this works or not. But if you do have it, go to the OPTION screen, play SOUND TEST 11 and press buttons 1 and 2, and you should have an extra two options - Damage Toggle and Stage Select.

STAR FOX (SF)

OK, how do you get to the Black Hole? Easy peasy. On level one, on the asteroid stage, have yourself inside the cockpit view and, after the first lot of asteroids, there will be a line of five asteroids with an orange one in the middle. Head for the orange one and shoot it at the last second. Do this three times and an asteroid with a face on it will appear straight after. Head towards it and ram straight into it (alternatively, shoot it a few times to reveal the entrance to the Black Hole, then enter it) and you'll be at the Black Hole! Inside there are all sorts of weird objects flying around, including circular doors which (if you shoot and go through them) will gain you power ups; the exits (similar to energy circles) will warp you to different locations on the map.

Another secret stage in the game can be found on level 3. Again, on the asteroid stage (stage 2), when the asteroids appear, you will see a dark grey, smoother asteroid heading towards you. Avoid this, fly right and you'll see a second one. Fly at it and it will explode, sending out an egg whizzing into the distance; this will hatch into a bird that flies towards you. Fly into the bird and you'll be whisked into another dimension. This Parodius-like stage is totally weird and, at the end, you'll get a 3D slot machine. Shoot the arm to play, collect the money if you win and avoid the missiles and lasers if

you get the baddie! To see the end of this section, you must try to get three sevens.

If you want to see some of the objects in the game and be able to manipulate them, play the game and get 10,000 points or more to gain a continue. Then, on the next stage, kill yourself and when you get the option to continue you can muck about with the 3D objects with the pads in the window as follows:

Pad 1:

The pad rotates the object in certain directions.

The L and R buttons scale the object.

Button X halts the object.

Button A draws the object.

Pad 2:

The pad will cycle through the objects available. Unfortunately, not all the objects are available.

Also, as you all know, on stage one of each level, flying through all the archways will gain you a power up. On level one, on the asteroid stage, near the end of the asteroid field, there will be three orange asteroids in a triangle formation. If you DO NOT shoot them, but fly through the middle of the triangle, a power up will appear!!

And here's a strange thing. When you are out in space and inside the craft, if you fire off a Nova Bomb and quickly press SELECT to change views to the outside before the bomb explodes, the bomb will be cancelled and you'll gain back the bomb!!

Neo Geo owners with **Fatal Fury 2** (or if you play the coin-op)... check out the Neo Geo page for the Super Special moves for each character in the game.

Remember if you have some nutritious tips you'd like to share with other readers, send them to:

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Send all classifieds marked SWAPS to the usual EB address and we'll fit them in, space permitting. Maximum 50 words per ad.

FOR SALE: Castlevania IV, NCAA Basketball for US SNES, £20 each or swap for other decent Jap games. Also wanted: knackered console/hardware, any condition considered. Please call Lewis on 0837-840718 weekends ONLY.

FOR SALE: PC Engine games: World Court Tennis, R-Type, Dungeon Explorer, £15 each; Shinobi, Out Run, Op Wolf, Chase HQ, Golf Boy, Power Drift, Vigilante, Ninja Spirts, £10 each; PAL PC Engine, £60, 5 player adapter, £10. Ring Stuart 0742-464545.

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EXCHANGE: CD Interactive Discs: Palm Springs Open, Escape from Cybercity, Caesar's Palace World of Gambling, Time Life 35mm Photography, Story Machine Star Dreams, Renaissance of Florence, Backgammon, Defender of the Crown, Exchange for similar priced titles. Also discs wanted to buy. Phone 07048 79171 before 8.00 pm.

WANTED: PAL Turbo Duo or PC Engine and CD-ROM, poss. SNES P/Ex. Ring Dave on Nottingham 0602-762827 between 6.30pm and 8pm weekdays only.

WANTED: Devil Crash on PC Engine and also World Court Tennis. Phone Steve on 0942-825481 after 6pm.

WANTED: Any Engine CD-ROM games plus carts (especially shoot 'em ups). Tel 0474-706300 and ask for Brett.

WANTED: PC Engine games, especially Salamander, Legendary Axe II, Raiden, Columns, Super Mario, Bomber Man, Tatsujin, Don Doko Don, Spiral Wave. Also wanted Turbo Duo - buy or swap for SFC games Top Racer, Naxat Pinball, Smash TV, Road Runner, Starfox (Jap). Contactat 3 Alpine Avenue, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5LG.



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